



## Strengthening Socio-Health Systems

**BECAUSE EVERYONE COUNTS**

*A year ago, UNFPA installed Solar Suitcases in 60 Peripheral Health Units (PHUs) across the Bo, Bombali, Kailahun, Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Kono, Moyamba, Port Loko and Tonkolili districts.*



*The young girls were separated into teams of 2 and 3, and were released into the communities. Their agenda was to discover how many adolescent girls are in a household under the age of 25, how many are going to school, how many are mothers, how many are pregnant etc.*



Sierra Leone observes  
2014 International Day  
to End Fistula



Operation Gideon's  
Operation



59 midwives graduate  
with UNFPA support from  
the School of Midwifery  
in Makeni



120 Volunteers graduate  
from the Volunteer Peer  
Educator Programme



# 59 midwives graduate with UNFPA

*support from the School of Midwifery in Makeni*



Top students receiving awards

The School of Midwifery in Makeni (SOMM) celebrated the graduation of 59 midwives on Saturday 10th May 2014. This is the third batch of students to graduate from the Makeni School since UNFPA started supporting the project in 2010.

The graduation program theme was “Midwives: Improving Women’s Health Globally”. It was an occasion in recognition of the hard work that the graduates had put in during the two-year program. There was a skit performed by the graduates to reinforce the issue of choosing maternity and midwifery clinics over traditional practices in order to save the lives of mothers giving birth.

UNFPA started supporting the midwifery schools in Freetown and Makeni in 2010 to address the critical shortage of midwives in Sierra Leone. Since UNFPA started assisting the midwifery project, there have been over three hundred (300) midwives trained from both schools.

The official opening of the Practicing Maternity Unit alongside the school concluded the ceremony.

The event took place at the Makeni Midwifery School compound.



Safiatu Foday, President of the Midwives Association giving an award to a graduate.



Sister Fatmata Dabo, Midwifery Instructor and Dr. Bannet Ndyanabangi, giving a student an award



# Sierra Leone observes 2014 International Day to End Fistula



L-R, Margaret Mannah-MacCarthy, Country Midwife Adviser, Dr. Sarian Kamara, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Foday Sawi

*On Friday 23rd May 2014, UNFPA joined the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) and other partners to commemorate the second International Day to End Fistula on the theme 'Tracking Fistula Transforming Lives.'*



UNFPA staff united in the fight to end fistula



Betty Alpha, Gender Officer and Margaret Mannah-MacCarthy, Country Midwife Adviser

Fistula is a health issue that needs excessive attention in Sierra Leone due to its debilitating effect on mothers. Obstetric Fistula is a preventable injury that occurs during childbirth due to untimely and inadequate medical care, and as a result, the woman is rendered incontinent.

During 2013, a total of 404 suspected cases of Fistula were mobilized by UNFPA's partners; out of whom 188 patients were

repaired with a success rate of 97%. In addition to treatment, UNFPA also provides support to the social integration of Fistula survivors. All 188 repaired patients have been integrated into their respective communities.

The commemoration was held at the Princess Christian Maternity Hospital (PCMH) at Fourah Bay Road in Freetown.



# Operation Gideon's Operation



Gideon receiving a donation from from the UNDP Staff and the UN Staff Association

**A few months ago, UNFPA driver Gideon Kamara had his shoulder dislocated in a brutal, unprovoked attack in Freetown.**

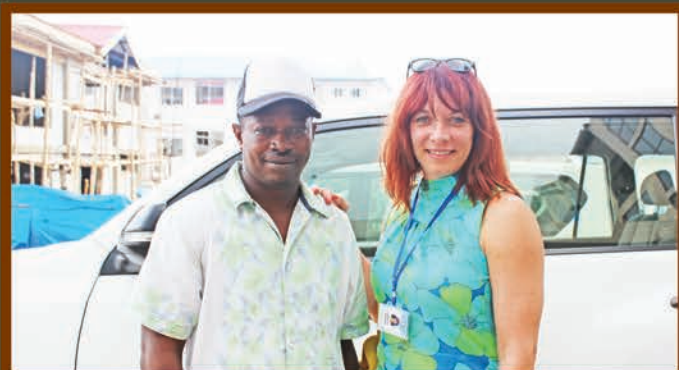
Several attempts made to reconstruct the shoulder by local doctors proved to be unsuccessful and Gideon's shoulder deteriorated and as a direct result his work performance suffered. Doctors advised that he undergo specialized reconstructive shoulder surgery either in Kenya or South Africa, but Gideon is unable to meet the financial requirement.

The doctors confirmed that the condition of Gideon's injury would continue to deteriorate, and he would eventually lose his employment if he continued performing his duties as subpar level; which would have a disastrous impact on his family (wife and two children) and his livelihood.

Agnes Kochan, the newly arrived UNFPA International Operations Manager, got wind of his unfortunate story while being driven by Gideon.

Agnes took it upon herself to spearhead Operation Gideon's Operation. She started collecting donations that would cover not just the surgery but also the travel expenses, and she started with her former station. The UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava, Slovakia donated a significant amount to the cause. Not to be outdone,

UNFPA responded in kind to meet the needs of one its own. Unfortunately, the cost of the surgery was not fully covered and so Agnes continued her altruistic venture by writing a request letter to the UN Staff Association. UN colleagues who had never met Gideon responded and a substantial amount was collected and donated to Gideon by the UNDP Staff and the UN Staff Association. The Chairman of the Staff Association, Abdul Karim Bah, stated that the contribution was done in solidarity with our colleague in need of support. Although Gideon's medical cost is not quite yet fully covered, he is hopeful that more donations will turn in and grateful to those who have shown their support and kindness towards his cause.





# Girls Empowering Girls in Kono

The Action for Adolescent Girls Programme is part of the Adolescent and Youth Strategy approved in 2012.



Data collection from households in Kono done by young volunteers

The young girls were separated into teams of 2 and 3, and were released into the communities. Their agenda was to discover how many adolescent girls are in a household under the age of 25, how many are going to school, how many are mothers, how many are pregnant etc.

This information is then compiled and used to provide social and economic tools for these adolescents that will empower them with information and a support system. These young girls who collected the data will also act as mentors for the adolescent girls.

The Action for Adolescent Girls Programme is part of the Adolescent and Youth Strategy approved in 2012. UNFPA is fulfilling its commitment by meeting needs that go unfulfilled in many regions throughout the country such as child marriage and adolescent pregnancy. The goal of the programme is to protect adolescent girls' human

rights, in particular delaying age at marriage and childbearing and elevating the status of marginalised and poor girls in communities. The Action for Adolescent Girls programme is based on the girl-centred model initiated by the Population Council.

The pilot in Kono is the second project to be implemented under the Action for Adolescent girls programmes. The first is in Koinadugu implemented by MAT-

CORPS and Kono is implemented by Women in Crisis Movement WICM. It is the hope of the shareholders and implementing partners involved that many more of its kind will be established around the country, in rural communities, to serve adolescent girls.

The training took place over the course of two days in June and implementation is on-going.



Young girls listen on as they are being trained on a mapping exercise to provide economic and social asset implications for adolescent girls in Kono



# 120 Volunteers graduate from the Volunteer Peer Educator Programme



L-R, Dr. Bannet Ndyanabangi, Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs, Fereh Musu-Konteh and Restless Development Country Director, Jamie Bedson

For 8 months, 120 young people volunteered to live in rural communities and teach sexual and reproductive health to both in and out-of-school youths. Their service ended in June and was commemorated with a three (3) day event which comprised of a long debriefing process in which the Volunteer Peer Educators reflected on their work in the communities, sharing lessons and experiences and concluded with a certification ceremony. These current volunteers have also played a crucial part of the national Ebola sensitization response.

The volunteers were dressed in colourful representation of each province to which they were assigned. A summary of the previous two days debrief was presented by the volunteers. They informed the audience of the situations that they had to encounter and obstacles they had to overcome, but most important, they told of their success stories and the lives they touched and mentalities they changed.

**The Volunteer Peer Educator programme boasts over 1000 ex-volunteers since its inception in 2005.**



Volunteer Peer Educator Certification Ceremony supported by UNFPA

The Volunteer Peer Educator programme boasts over 1000 ex-volunteers since its inception in 2005. Each year Restless Development, implementing partner of UNFPA Sierra Leone, recruits and trains volunteers to work and live in rural communities all over the country in outreach to the youths. These current volunteers are part of the national Ebola sensitization report.

The certification ceremony took place on Friday 27th June 2014 at Methodist Youth Resource Centre in Bo.



# Phone Companies fight Ebola



The phones were handed over to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation on Saturday, 14th June, 2014. The Minister of Health, Hon. Miatta Kargbo compared the mobile phones to ammunition provided to soldiers on a battlefield and was grateful to Africell and Airtel in joining the fight to stop the virus that is plaguing Sierra Leone.

UNFPA supported the training of 300 Community Health Workers (CHWs) who are utilising the phones in the Kailahun District. The Managing Directors of Africell Shadi Gerjawi and Airtel Sudipto Chowdhury both asserted that they felt a responsibility to Sierra Leone

and their customers, and wanted to be part of the solution to the Ebola crisis.

Sierra Leone mobile phone company Skytel also provided 30 mobile phones to also be used for Ebola contact tracing and surveillance. Managing Director Alie Skaikay has offered that he will be willing to offer 30 more if needed.

**Mobile phone companies partner with UNFPA** On Friday 13th June, 2014 UNFPA in a first time partnership with mobile phone companies Africell (SL) and Airtel (SL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the provision of mobile phones, SIM cards, Closed User Groups (CUGs) SMS and call services to enhance contact tracing of the Ebola outbreak.

Each company donated 150 phones to be used for Ebola contact tracing and surveillance along with six months free airtime. The phones are equipped with a database to capture and store information to be relayed to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The feature CUG allows unlimited free calls between these phones.







# Solar Suitcases

## increases Night-time Deliveries

UNFPA funded Solar Suitcase in a Community Health Centre in Kangama Kono District

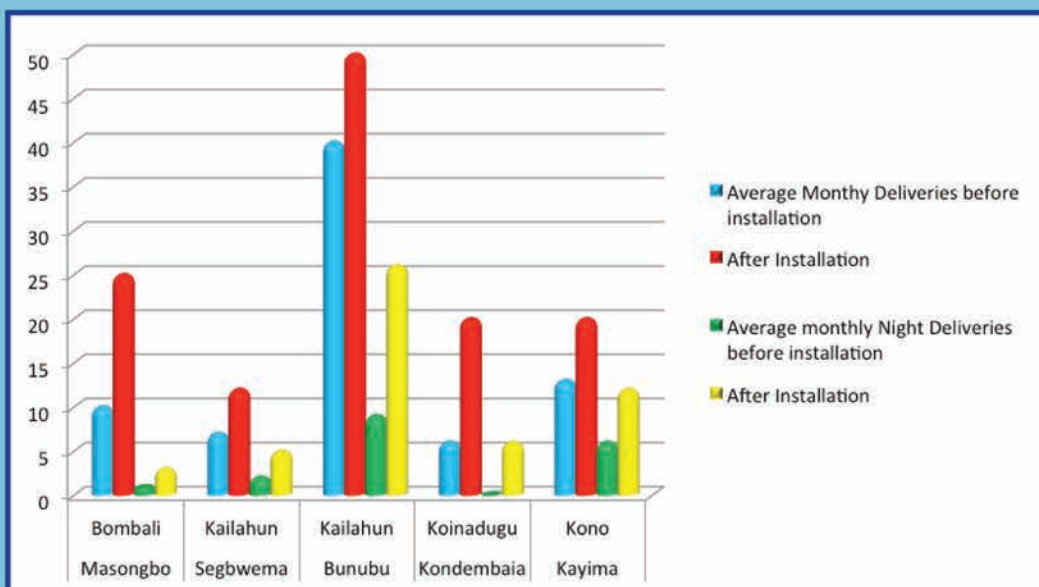
A year ago, UNFPA installed Solar Suitcases in 60 Peripheral Health Units (PHUs) across the Bo, Bombali, Kailahun, Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Kono, Moyamba, Port Loko and Tonkolili districts. A year later, the transformations as a result of the Solar Suitcases are evidentiary as night-time deliveries have increased significantly and most have doubled.

**"Babies don't always wait till sunrise"**

Rosaline Mariama Gbow, Midwife of the Community Health Centre (CHC) in Kangama, Kono

District says that her centre has about 10 deliveries a month and most of those deliveries, over 60%, take place at night. Midwife Gbow explained that when the news spread that the CHC had a Solar Suitcase installed, expecting mothers now visit at all hours of the night. She expressed that it has been a blessing and now the health care workers are more concerned with their duties than worrying about lack of energy.

"Babies don't always wait till sunrise," said Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, executive director of the U.N. Population Fund in describing the programme called We Care Solar Suitcase. The Solar Suitcases are packed with solar panels which provide electric light for maternity wards.





# Ebola Community Based Responses in Kailahun



Seated: Brima Kamara, Regional Family Planning Coordinator training community contact tracers

In May 2014, Sierra Leone detected its first case, ever, of Ebola and by end of July it had surpassed neighbouring Guinea for number of positive cases. In order to contain the outbreak in Kailahun district, the Government of Sierra Leone along with Implementing Partners (IPs) galvanised community based interventions. UNFPA offered its support by deploying community contact tracers in the 13 chiefdoms of the Kailahun District.

UNFPA has currently trained a total of 300 Community Health Workers (CHWs) as community contact tracers in those 13 chiefdoms through District Health Management Teams (DHMTs). Community contact tracers follow-up with contacts (people linked to confirmed Ebola cases or probable Ebola cases) and monitor whether those contacts exhibit signs and symptoms of Ebola based on the epidemiological case definition, which includes fever, diarrhoea and vomiting. The contact tracers give daily updates on the status of the contacts to the chiefdom supervisors who collect data from their respective chiefdoms and submit to the District Ebola Task Force through the District Surveillance Officer. Community deaths or Cases manifesting signs of Ebola, also referred to as “Alerts”, are communicated with ambulance teams for prompt referral to the Case Management Centres or Burial teams for safe burial within 24 hours.

Confirmed cases from the laboratory are line listed by the Surveillance team and new contacts are added for



Community Health Worker doing surveillance & contact tracing for Ebola

follow-up visits by Community Contact Tracers for a period of 21 days. This triangulated intervention ensures early detection and referral of cases and safe burials of community death to prevent new infection.

Within the period of 1st – 21st July, a total of 2,133 (87%) contacts were monitored out of 2,458 listed and 87 (3.5%) showed signs and symptoms of Ebola. Contacts with detected signs and symptoms are taken to “holding centres” where blood samples are collected for laboratory confirmation and referred to Case Management Centres in Kailahun and Kenema. 91 (3.7%) contacts have completed the 21 day monitoring period with no signs and symptoms based on the epidemiological definition and have been discharged from the monitoring list.



# Changing Lives



A cheerful and changed Fatmata Mansaray

Fatmata Mansaray is a 22 year-old young Volunteer Peer Educator (VPE) and this is how being a VPE changed her life. The Volunteer Peer Educator programme is a UNFPA/Department for International Development (DFID) funded and Restless Development implemented programme that sends young volunteers to live in rural communities of Sierra Leone to teach in and out-of-school youths about Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) for a period of 8 months. The volunteers have completed their duty and underwent a two-day debriefing process in Bo wherein the volunteers share their experiences with each other and how being VPE has impacted them.

Fatmata gets up to speak and the room comes alive with her commanding presence and Fiona Kaikai, UNFPA Adolescents and Youth Programme Specialist, took notice. After she finished speaking, Fiona asked Fatmata to be interviewed and she agreed.

**Fiona: Who were you before you were a VPE?**

Fatmata: Before being a VPE I used to go out looking for trouble. I was wild, my manner of approach-



Fatmata at the VPE graduation ceremony in Bo

ing people was wrong. I had dreadlocks, my dressing was provocative, which attracted ghetto boys to me, even though I did not want them.

**Fiona: What inspired you to join the VPE programme?**

Fatmata: I had withdrawn from the teacher training college, for over three months, due to the ill health of my dad and lack of finances. A former VPE mentioned the programme, what it is about. She also mentioned that the programme trained their volunteers on life skills amongst other things. She suggested I apply as it would keep me positively engaged and change my life.

**Fatmata gets up to speak and the room comes alive with her commanding presence and Fiona Kaikai, UNFPA Adolescents and Youth Programme Specialist, took notice.**

When I first went for the application form, I was told that I am not the kind of person that the Volunteer programme was looking for. I explained that I did not understand why I was rejected for I had the required qualifications. I went home. Determined, I dressed professionally and returned to reapply. I was admitted.

**Fiona: How has being a VPE changed your life? Do you believe yourself to be a role model for young people?**

Fatmata: Before I would have definitely said no, but now I am confident in saying yes. I am a changed person. I am more polite, I am more respectful and caring. I actually reached out to a younger lady who reminds me of my former self and I am mentoring her.

Fatmata now wants to read law for she believes that she can have more of an influence in the shaping of her community. She plans to complete her Higher Teachers Certificate, teach for some time and then retake the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) exam to supplement her credits, then join the University of Sierra Leone to study law.



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# Strengthening Socio-Health Systems



BECAUSE EVERYONE COUNTS

*Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.*

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