How we spent your money - Sherbro Foundation wants to let you know how your money was spent in the last year. A year ago, Ebola was a runaway train. Thanks to your support early in the epidemic, Bumpeh Chiefdom protected itself and served as a model for other chiefdoms. Today, Ebola is nearly stamped out. Huge thanks goes to our dedicated grassroots partner, the Center for Community Empowerment & Transformation. Because of their leadership and tireless work, our joint projects are back on track, and expanding to help more people move beyond poverty to self-sufficiency.

New: Concept to Harvest - Five Months

Barely five months after our first discussion with CCET about the Women’s Vegetable Growing Project, women are harvesting their first crops.

In early March we asked, what can we do to help people whose incomes were slashed in half by the Ebola crisis? The answer was, help women farmers start fast-growing cash crops like peanuts and vegetables.

Today, women are finishing a first harvest of peanuts, corn, cucumbers & okra. Each woman will net 3-4 times our initial $75 investment after saving seed for their next crop in September and donating seed for the next group of women.

Sherbro Foundation works to improve people’s lives within months – not years.

Happiness is Enough Food to Feed Your Family

Ask Isatu Bendu what makes her feel good and she’ll tell you: “When I have money to feed my children and send them to school.”

Last year, Isatu was a single mother scraping by cooking and selling school lunches. Then Ebola closed the schools. She sent one of her two daughters to live with her sister in the capital because she couldn’t afford to feed her.

Today, Isatu is among 35 Bumpeh Chiefdom women raising vegetables in the Women’s Vegetable Growing Project. She’s earning more money and learning to run a small farming business. She plans to return to Adult Literacy classes resuming this fall to learn to read and write.
Breaking the Chain of Ebola Transmission

Bumpeh Chiefdom created a locally led program to break the chain of Ebola transmission that was unique in the country. By November 2014, they went over 50 days with no new Ebola cases, while the epidemic surged around them. These results attracted national attention. They led to the Sierra Leone government to securing a $1.2MM WHO grant in December 2014 for chiefdoms nationwide to implement similar programs. With collective action by all 149 chiefdoms, the new Ebola case rate dropped 80% by January 2015. Key was chiefdom focus on changing high risk behaviors like burial practices.

Sherbro Foundation is proud to have funded 90% of Bumpeh Chiefdom’s Ebola control program, enabling them to be a model for others. We continue to fund an Ebola surveillance program with two workers touring villages by motorbike.

Girls Return to School With School Uniforms

Schools reopened in April after Ebola closed them for nine months. Many rural families are struggling now with the cost of returning their children to school.

To help cope with the post-Ebola economic crisis, the Sierra Leone government is paying annual secondary school fees of about $25 USD for all children.

But they are not covering uniforms. And uniforms cost more than the school fees. Most rural schools let students return on a temporary basis without uniforms. It’s urgent to just get children back in school learning again.

Sherbro Foundation made the decision to shift our Girls Scholarship Fund this year to pay for school uniforms so more girls return to school – and stay in school. We funded 150 girls, again covering four Bumpeh Chiefdom secondary schools and adding one primary school.

One in Three Children Don’t Exist

Bumpeh Chiefdom is making an important intervention for children by registering births. UNICEF cited one in three children in the world still do not have their births documented. In Sierra Leone, it’s much higher. These children can be denied birthrights of land ownership, voting & services like health care.

Governments and aid organizations can’t accurately plan and budget programs for children because they don’t know where, how many and what ages they are.

To protect children, Bumpeh Chiefdom started its own birth – and death – registration system. Sherbro Foundation funds two workers to visit villages by motorbike and collect data from village volunteer leaders.

We will be combining this with the Newborn Baby Savings Program in a Fall campaign to give babies a secure start in life.

This was a challenging year. Sherbro Foundation is proud we kept delivering on our mission to advance education and economic empowerment. We really appreciate your joining us. I hope you’ve seen here what a great impact your donation has made. In two years, we’ve improved the lives of over 1,500 people in rural Sierra Leone. Thank you!

You can read more about these and all our projects at www.sherbrofoundation.org.

Arlene Golembiewski
Executive Director

www.sherbrofoundation.org