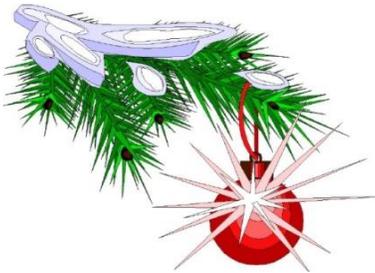




## Growing Self Sufficient Futures – December 2015



**Back after two years** – Executive Director Arlene Golembiewski returned in November from her first visit to Sierra Leone in two years. She witnessed the official announcement the country was finally Ebola-free. But the impact of the country's economic crisis remains everywhere. During her five-week stay, Arlene criss-crossed Bumpeh Chiefdom with our local nonprofit partner, the **Center for Community Empowerment and Transformation**, visiting 10 villages, and found all our projects in full swing. "I was thrilled with what CCET accomplished in spite of the Ebola crisis. Most every project moved forward, some taking major steps." Together, CCET & Sherbro Foundation made plans for a bright 2016.



Mabinty Kamara holds baby Abdul born April 2015 and awaits his trees & bank account.

### Growing a Baby's Future – Babies are waiting!

Our **Growing a Baby's Future** program has a backlog of babies! After enrolling 1250 babies, we had to stop with the Ebola crisis. This left over 1,000 babies born in the last 18 months awaiting fruit trees and education savings accounts.

The innovative locally created program renews the old custom of planting fruit trees for newborns and adds an education saving plan. Parents grow fruit to fund their babies' secondary school education. Families who never had cash or a place to save are learning to save in a real bank account we open for \$5.

This kind of "microsavings" is possible with a new nonprofit community bank that encourages saving \$2 and \$3 at a time. Financial Services Association's mission could be ours: "Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty."



Kadiatu Kamara and her daughter born before Ebola. Baby Kadiatu's plum tree (right) is doing well.

### Give the gift that keeps on giving

Give a gift this holiday season that will change a child's life in Sierra Leone.

Our **Growing a Baby's Future** project capitalizes on an old tradition of planting a tree for each newborn. Your gift will give families three fruit trees to raise and an open an education savings account for their baby.

Your gift means the fruit – citrus, plum, guava and coconut -- will keep on yielding income for the child's education savings account for years to come.

Plus, we will register the child's birth. **All for 20 bucks!**

You can give a holiday gift to friends and relatives that becomes a living trust fund. They'll be touched to know their gift is giving a baby a secure start in life.

Visit [www.SherbroFoundation.org/donate](http://www.SherbroFoundation.org/donate) by Dec 22. **Happy Holidays!**



Nasundu Village chief in cleared orchard. Black flags mark tree seedlings.

*'Since we are here, we never see this kind of thing happen to us. We volunteer because we need this kind of action to happen in our village.'*

## **Grassroots Development: the Village Orchard Program**

How can you build schools, dig wells, improve roads and send children to school if all you have is your own land and water? You grow trees.

This year six Bumpah Chiefdom villages planted 15,000 fruit tree seedlings, all grown from seed by our partner CCET in local nurseries. Seed is literally collected from fruit people eat: orange, grapefruit, mango, guava, avocado, plum, coconut.

Villages lead and manage their own projects. They provide the land and labor, and receive thousands of tree seedlings and training on growing techniques like transplanting and erosion control. Project leaders come for weekly coaching.

Villages are eagerly stepping forward to develop orchards of 10 to 20 acres with volunteers. Nasundu planted 2,500 trees. In a few years, it can look forward to tens of thousands of dollars in annual fruit income to develop their village. Fruit trees continue to produce fruit and income for years to come. In five years, the program plans to cover the chiefdom of 40,000 people with fruitful orchards.



The spacious Computer Center is ready for two classrooms, offices, a printing service and canteen.

## **A dream four years in the making nearly here**

During the Ebola crisis, the burned-out shell of a building lost during the war was transformed into a 40 x 60 **Community Computer Center**. Now, it will house computer literacy classes, giving job skills to students unable to attend college.

We're adding the district's first copy and printing service to generate income to run the center. We expect a lot of business from miles around. Getting anything printed is now a four-hour trip to the capital, Freetown.

The computers are already there. The Center plans a March opening, after desks and chairs are locally built and we wire solar power from a nearby system. With reliable solar power, we can provide computer and evening adult literacy classes - and avoid big generator fuel costs. In 2011, we dreamed of bringing computer literacy to this rural town. Now, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is nearly here.



Arlene visits Nasundu village.

## **How do you get so much done, so fast?**

Our mission is to help lift the poorest people out of poverty now living on \$1 a day. Not an easy task, especially in rural areas. I'm often asked, how did you get so much done so fast? And at such low cost? In a nutshell, we:

**Work as partners** – Empower communities to meet needs they identify, not ours

**Use local authorities** – Work directly with the Paramount Chief and his chiefdom officials down to the village level to define and implement programs. They lead. Neither of us hires new staff. Strong local ownership delivers program results quickly. They adjust with experience and respond to changing conditions.

**Stress sustainability** - Choose practical projects and technology simple to implement and sustain in rural areas.

**Leverage money** – Seed productive new ideas that attract new support.

Sherbro Foundation is proud 100% of donations go to our programs. Really. Both SFSL and CCET are volunteer organizations. Our small administrative costs are paid by a separate donation. We sincerely appreciate you joining our journey that has improved the lives of over 2,000 people in rural Sierra Leone. Next year we promise more. Thank you!

----- Arlene Golembiewski, Executive Director