



## **Eliminating poverty through education and economic empowerment** **September 2015**



*Women's Vegetable Growing Project*

**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, Bumpah 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 Bumpah 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.



## ***Fall Campaign - Growing a Baby's Future***

In Sierra Leone, only 30% of children can afford secondary school. Without education, they never escape poverty. Post-Ebola, it's even harder.

***Growing a Baby's Future*** empowers parents to start saving for their child's education right after birth by growing fruit trees. [Here's what \\$20 buys:](#)

- Three income-producing fruit trees for each baby.
- The family's first bank account with a \$4 minimum deposit.
- Registering the baby's birth and a birth certificate.

Parents are learning a culture of saving for the future by saving income from fruit to fund their child's education – a living safety net. To make every child count, we help the chiefdom register births. With no birth certificate, children can be denied birthrights of owning property, voting and access to health care.

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!

***Please contribute to our fall campaign -- Growing a Baby's Future -- at [www.sherbrofoundation.org/donate](http://www.sherbrofoundation.org/donate) .***

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