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# Foreword



*Foday Bassie Swaray*  
Executive Director

Dear Readers,

It is with great delight that we welcome you to our maiden newsletter. This year's journey on the quest to changing lives and positively impacting society has begun.

In the last couple of months, AASL has engaged in a series of activities to champion the fight to eradicate poverty and social injustices which we would like to share with you in this edition. With support from the European Union in Sierra Leone, we commenced the implementation of a project geared towards building the capacity of civil society to meaningfully participate in national level policy processes in Sierra Leone.

It features our Open Information Presentation which encompasses the sharing of our Annual Plans and Budget at district and national levels, in fulfillment of our commitment to be more accountable and transparent to our right holders, donors, government, partners and other stakeholders.

With support from John and Grace Perkin, we constructed, installed and handed over solar equipment, desktop computers and accessories to St. Peter's Catholic School in Rosengbeh community, Tonkolili district in a bid to enhance access to quality education for children in that district.

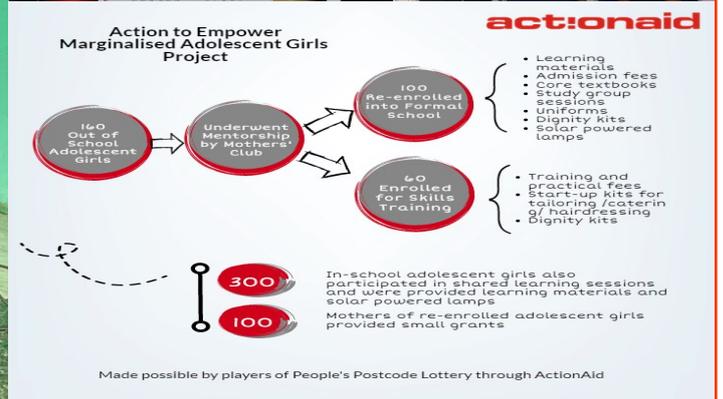
Thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery, AASL is able to support 360 adolescent girls both in and out-of-school by providing them with start-up kits and learning materials to build their capacity and ensure they become self-reliant.

AASL joins the world in celebrating the International Women's Day (IWD), and accordingly organized a week-long activity including a "Tea-time on Gender Equality", "Symposium on Wealth Tax for Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality", a football match for women in sports, and collaborated with the Government through the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs to celebrate in the provinces.

We remain grateful to all our donors, supporters, organizations and individuals that have collaborated with us in our work to achieve social justice, gender equality, and the ultimate eradication of poverty in Sierra Leone.

Happy Reading!

# Empowering marginalised Adolescent girls through the AEMAG project



**“ActionAid has given me hope. I’ve received all my school needs, empowerment trainings and psychological support from the organisation. I am physically challenged and it is tedious for me to travel from my community to school every day. My family’s economic situation is not helping matters so I eventually dropped out of school for some months. It was around that time I got in contact with ActionAid and became part of the AEMAG project. Since then, the trajectory of my life has completely changed for the better. If ActionAid hadn’t intervened, I don’t know what would have become of me.”** This is the testimony of Bendu Jombo, an adolescent girl re-enrolled in school.

**“When everyone shunned me because of my disability, ActionAid embraced me. I was uncomfortable to mingle with others but ActionAid through the empowerment sessions has boosted my self-esteem. Not only that, I have been enrolled in the ‘Useful Hands Vocational Institute’ where I am currently pursuing a hairdressing course to become self-reliant. I have also received a start-up kit including all necessary equipment I need to setup my trade”** stated Hawanatu Turay, a skills training beneficiary of the Action to Empower Marginalized Adolescent Girls project.

**“Action to Empower Marginalized Adolescent Girls”** project funded by players of People’s Postcode Lottery is a 15 months project geared towards the empowerment of 360 adolescent girls both in and out of school. The implementation of the project commenced in October 2021 and ended in December 2022.

**“Because of how impactful the project has been, the donor called for an extension to March 2024.”** The project supports the education of girls in Western Area and Bo district in Sierra Leone. It also perfectly resonates with the Government’s “Free Quality School Education” program and the “Radical Inclusion Policy”, which creates a platform for girls to access education regardless of their circumstances.

The direct beneficiaries reached are 300 girls in school across 10 communities in Freetown and Bo. These girls get empowerment sessions facilitated by school mentors trained by ActionAid. They are also supported with learning materials and other necessary items to ensure they stay in school. There are other 60 girls supported with skills training in tailoring, hairdressing, and catering. They receive start-up kits to prepare them to practice of their skills.

**Some pictorial highlights of the Symbolic Distribution of start-up kits and learning materials to adolescent girls both in and out-of-school (AEMAG project)**



# Inception workshop of “Action for inclusive social and economic service delivery” project



The European Union to “support CSOs as actors of good governance and development in Sierra Leone” has granted ActionAid and its implementing partners; Advocate for Social Justice and Development (ASJD) and Women’s action for Human dignity (WAHD) the sum of Eur785,000 for the implementation of a 30-month project in BO, BOMBALI, and KONO.

The project titled “ENHANCING CSO PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL LEVEL POLICY PROCESSES” has the overarching aim of improving public accountability for the provision of responsive basic public services. The key aim of this project is to facilitate inclusive CSO participation in dialogue with government on development policy and practice through supporting CSOs and their networks to create an enabling environment for Civil Society to operate as actor good governance at all levels. The locations of implementation cover the southern (Bo), northern (Bombali), and eastern (Kono) provinces of Sierra Leone .

## **What is the project trying to address?**

**Policy Related:** CSOs, CBOs and grassroots organisations in Bombali, Bo and Kono face considerable challenges, limiting their potential role in promoting democracy, including skills deficits and opportunities to interact with government.

**Independence:** The political alignment of some CSOs deepen division and weaken the possibilities for CSOs to champion common causes of national concern. Lack of progress in developing common CSO movements, and the fragmentation of civil society.

**Funding and sustainability challenge:** Smaller CSOs, particularly those based outside of the capital, struggle to secure funding for their work, in part because of the absence of fundraising skills but also because of a scarcity of funding for governance work. Limited Engagement at National Level policy processes – Development, Accountability, Transparency.

# Signing of MOU with EU to implement projects promoting women's empowerment



## A Culture of Accountability– National Open Information Presentation 2023



Following the presentation of Plans and Budget of all LRPs to the different District and Community stakeholders, ActionAid Sierra Leone presents its Plans and Budget to the Nation inviting all National stakeholders, CSOs, MDAs, its partners, and the Media.

The core purpose of this yearly presentation is to advance the need to support accountability and transparency in Sierra Leone, enhance our collaboration with key stakeholders and improve knowledge, trust, and communicate the achievements of our interventions.

This resolution is guided by our commitment to transparency, and sharing information with right holders, partners we implement with, our staff, donors and the government. AASL pledges itself to informing stakeholders how much money is available for developmental work, our focus areas and how it is been used.

The Executive Director of AASL, Foday Bassie Swaray expressed that this process of openly sharing information started in 2007, and it is not only a part of the organisation's ways of working, but it is also the right thing to do. ActionAid defines Accountability as a responsible use of Power. **“In our work, we receive money for and on behalf of communities from supporters and donors, that is why we strive to provide the relevant information to our multiple stakeholders to be able to hold us accountable”**. He added that **“our concept of accountability is deeply rooted in our theory of change, our Human rights based approach and in our global and national policies.”**



The Director of NGO Affairs, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development; Eric Masallay declared that ActionAid has been a major partner in development and he can attest that the organization has always exceeded expectation. He also said that the level of accountability exhibited by ActionAid ensures the sustainability of the programs and projects implemented which is evident in the high level of ownership shown by communities in which they operate.



According to the Head of Women in Crisis movement, A partner of AASL; Juliana Conteh, AASL has greatly contributed to building its organisation's capacity and has been actively engaged with the community people to share all the plans and budget for the implementation of activities with them. ActionAid also ensures to monitor all the activities implemented in communities throughout the year. **“I am certain that the resources received for the people will be used judiciously as that has been a norm for AASL” she added.**

Aminata Kamara, a right holder said that AASL has implemented numerous developmental initiatives in her community, and she expressed gratitude on their behalf. **“Personally, it is because of the interventions and training of AASL I can boldly use my voice to contribute meaningfully to not only my home but my community as well.**



## ActionAid Sierra Leone hands over second component of the Perkins Project to St. Peter's School



The event which was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 at the St. Peter's Catholic Junior Secondary School in Rosengbeh, Mayossoh Chiefdom of Tonkolili District featured the handing over of the second component of the "Improving access to quality education for children in Tonkolili District" project funded by the late John and his wife, Grace Perkins. **"The sole purpose of us being here today is to give to the school, the community, and the district,"** stated the Head of Program and Policy of AASL, Mohamed A. Fofana. Representatives from the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Teaching Service Commission, Free Quality School Education Program, Tonkolili District Council, and the Chiefdom were in attendance.

The apparatuses handed over to the school by the Executive Director of ActionAid, Foday Bassie Swaray are, a library furnished with tables, chairs, shelves, standing fans, 3 desktop computers, other IT equipment, 232 assorted textbooks, with hygiene and sanitation materials added to the six classroom building, two VIP toilets, eight solar panels, six solar batteries, a water well, and 126 solar lamps provided to the school by ActionAid Sierra Leone. All together, these have improved the learning experiences of the pupils and enabled them to perform better both in school and public examinations.

The Director of Planning of the Tonkolili District Council, Ibrahim Sowa laid emphasis on the transparency of ActionAid Sierra Leone. **"AASL is renowned for calling on stakeholders to discuss the funds they receive and state exactly what they intend to do with it. Rosengbeh community is privileged to be a beneficiary of the interventions of ActionAid as the organization has always been transparent and accountable to the people."** He also implored the community to take full ownership of this development and ensure its sustainability. school which have a ripple effect on national development.



Alpha Nehmahu representing the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education stated that he is **“grateful to AASL for complimenting the Government’s efforts in making free quality education accessible to children in Rosengbeh Community”**. **“ActionAid is true to its name and always come to the rescue of communities in need. Our educational system has been in a deplorable state, that’s why the Government brought up this initiative and is always ready to work with organisations like ActionAid to make a better Sierra Leone”** put in Abu Mohamed Koroma, representative from the Free Quality School Education program.

The Executive Director of AASL, Foday Bassie Swaray while giving his keynote address intreated the community people to protect the school as they would their houses and properties and to keep the children in school which have a ripple effect on national development. **“One of our values at AASL is independency. If there is a need, we intervene regardless of religion, ethnic backgrounds, or geographic locations. We also believe that education is one way to eradicate poverty and that can be achieved through providing schooling materials for the children which will positively impact the trajectory of their lives.”**

Musu Conteh, Head girl of the school expressed appreciation to AASL for providing all the facilities they need to be in a conducive learning environment. She promised that they will utilize all what have been provided and not engage in anything that will jeopardize their education.

## Academic performance of Pupils improved through the construction of schools



In the outskirts of Kambia District, at Masimra of Masungbala Chiefdom and Lal-Gberay of the same chiefdom, AASL continues to make headways especially in the educational sector. The challenges of these communities regarding access to quality education prior to the intervention of AASL are quite similar.

Before AASL's operation in Lal-Gberay and Masimra of Masungbala Chiefdom, the school structures there were below average. ActionAid has since been focused on the construction and renovation of numerous schools to increase the chances of children that are living in these inopportune communities to easily access Education. In Lal-Gberay, AASL partnered with Steven Caulker foundation to build the Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary school.

According to the principal of Ahmadiyya Primary School in Lal-Gberay, Bali S. Bangura, the school has yielded massive improvements. **"We had a dilapidated structure before AASL built a new school for the pupils. ActionAid has also employed and trained teachers who have proven to be very influential to the pupils' progress. This has equally contributed to the performance of the pupils even in public exams; For the National Primary School Examination (NPSE), 100% of our students hit the pass mark"**.

In Masimra village, class congestion and Poor infrastructure were sighted as major problems faced by children of this community. The children and commuters expressed their gratitude to AASL for the newly constructed school. Pa Hussein Bangura, the town chief stated that ActionAid has constructed multiple schools in their community and they are grateful because **"If the schools had not been constructed in our community, the children would not have access to quality education; it is only Action Aid that always comes to our rescue."**

Morlai Santigi Bangura a teacher at the Kambia District Council School (KDC) stated that **"we are very grateful for the intervention of AASL because without their support we would not have enough classrooms to accommodate all the pupils and it would be difficult to control the classes"**. He further stated that distance was another issue their children had to deal with. Previously, the pupils had to walk for miles to attend schools in neighboring communities but all that has been solved as a result of AASL's intervention in their community.

Abdulai M. Kamara, a nine-year-old pupil who attends Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary, thanked AASL for the construction of the school in their community as someone like him who has leg injury cannot walk for long distance.

## **The Celebration of International Women's Day 2023**

ActionAid Sierra Leone organized a series of activities for the celebration of IWD including A Symposium on Wealth Tax for Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality, Tea time on Gender Equality, and partnered with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and other developmental allies at our various LRPs.

The "Tea time on Gender Equality" was a pre-engagement activity for IWD which was organized on the 7th of March at AASL's conference room where staff met for a frank and critical discussion on a range of issues surrounding Gender Equality.

Discussions on the theme of this year's celebration and the position of AASL's women's forum were tabled, ActionAid's stance on women's rights and Innovation and Technology, and ultimately recognition and acknowledgment of women who have made an impact on participants' lives and how Innovation and Technology can improve such impact. . Additionally, there was an opportunity to thank and honour the women in all departments of the organization for their hard work, dedication and encourage all for a bigger push toward equality and solidarity in the workplace. AASL Women's Forum actively championed this activity and created awareness of important legal instruments especially the GEWE Act as well as bringing on ideas and proposals that focus on protecting and promoting the affairs of women and girls in the society and sharing their leadership journeys.

The Symposium on "Wealth Tax for Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality" was held on the 9th of March as a post IWD event and observation of Global days of Action for women's rights 2023 that brought together female and male champions including Tax campaigners from western Area . The importance of technology to enhance women's innovations at all levels was presented by a Digital Analyst. Solutions to current challenges of digitalization for women were proffered. There was also a presentation on wealth tax for a nation, its relevance for funding Gender-responsive technology for enhancing innovation for gender equality and how a nation can start the process. The discussions were led by the moderator and recommendations catalogued and will be submitted to the Ministry of Gender and Ministry of Finance for consideration.

At the Northern region, AASL partnered with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and other Developmental allies to celebrate IWD at the Makeni City Council Hall, Bombali District. The event propagated women's empowerment and Ending violence against women and girls. It was climaxed by the Ministry's presentation on the Gender Empowerment Act.

At the South-Eastern region, we took the game to the field for the community women in Bomotoke, Timdale Chiefdom in Moyamba.

# Some Pictorial highlights of the IWD events

SYMPOSIUM ON WEALTH TAX FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY



# Some Pictorial highlights of the IWD events

## TEA TIME ON GENDER EQUALITY



# Some Pictorial highlights of the IWD events

## IWD IN THE NORTHERN REGION LRP



# Some Pictorial highlights of the IWD events

## IWD IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN REGION LRP



# ActionAid in the News

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## Rosengbeh Gets New School From ActionAid Support

By Alhassan Spear Kamara

What has been described as a laudable development aimed at ensuring that school going children in Rosengbeh Village in the Tane Chiefdom, Tonkolili District, get the required education under the free quality education, was this week demonstrated when ActionAid Sierra Leone handed over new constructed six classroom building, Toilets, Water well and an equipped Library with IT Equipments to the Catholic family proprietors, St. Peter's Catholic Junior Secondary school in Rosengbeh, with funds from British Grace and Pekins. The couples have been very helpful to Tonkolili district for the past 10 years, extending humanitarian assistance to the poverty stricken residents. The ceremony, which took place at the school campus attracted stakeholders of Tonkolili, including representative of the host paramount chief, Tonkolili district council, MBSSSE officials, Teaching Service Commission, Free Quality education and Board Members from AASL office. Giving his keynote address the executive director AASL, Bassie Swaray, thanked the people of Rosengbeh for their support towards the completion of the project and encouraged them to



take great care of the properties. He revealed that his organisation implemented the project, and commended the donors Grace and Pekins for their support.

Rosengbeh, Speaker after speaker commended AASL, and in particular, the donors, Grace and Pekins

FOTO GRID



2023 PLANS AND BUDGET  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ACTIONAID SIERRA LEONE SPEAKS ON PRIORITIES

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## ActionAid presents over Le33m budget for 2023



accountability is deeply rooted in their organization's theory of change towards their human right base approach and in their global and national policy, adding that accountability is an integral part. He said they believe that one crucial element of change is that people living in poverty can hold duty bearers to account and, he said fulfilling their accountability promises is important to strengthen their legitimacy as an organization operating in Sierra Leone.

He said ActionAid reputation for being trustworthy and effective to strengthen relations with state and non-state actors to ensure sustainability of their intervention. Mr. Foday Bassie Swaray said ActionAid embrace and promote accountability rather than just react to it, adding that they are proactive in identifying and addressing accountability principles and ensure that they improve their practices of accountability. He said they at ActionAid believe that if people living in poverty can hold them to account they will be empowered to hold powerful duty bearers to account and derive their own rights and responsibilities.

He said ActionAid is committed to be transparent and accountable to their multiple stakeholders as they have lot of stakeholders that they must be accountable to as an organization in all their processes, approaches and mechanisms and some of them include choice and right holders which is the most important constituent that they work with.

He said ActionAid is accountable to its primary stakeholders at national level who are men, women, young people, children living in poverty and their communities.

He said that ActionAid received resources for and on behalf of the vulnerable people whom he said that their organization is answerable to. The Executive Director of ActionAid averred that they are accountable to

their donors and supporters, management of ActionAid resources entrusted to the organization like European Union and supporters of different country they should be able as an organization to demonstrate the impact of their work on the beneficiaries they work with as a result of the money they provided to action aid.

He continued that ActionAid is accountable to their partners they work with as their partnership with partners is always open. He said another critical stakeholder is the government, because he said they work in an environment that has laws and policies and ActionAid is implementing programs in the country and they are obliged to live by those accountability mechanisms and believe that they are contributing in the national development process, adding that they are also obliged to be accountable to their staff and volunteers of ActionAid as they also need to know about the organization and what funding they have received.

In her statement the newly appointed Board Chair for ActionAid SL, Madam Sinitia Lavalay Esq said that she is very pleased to be the newly appointed Board Chairperson for ActionAid and this year's annual presentation of budget and plans was her maiden one, adding that she joined ActionAid in 2018.

According to Madam Sinitia Lavalay Esq, ActionAid believe in gender diversity as that is the reason there is a mix of both men and women on the board.

She went on to thank the Executive Director and staff of ActionAid for taking the lead in transparency as they have been receiving accolades from the community people they closely work with.

Madam Lavalay noted that accountability is the hallmark of democracy, rule of law and progressive development in any society, adding that people should learn to be accountable in processes, accountable with funds received and have to be accountable at every level. She said that ActionAid prides itself to

be opened about it finances and budgets and to be accountable to the people whose funds the organization have received and to show credibility to its donors.

She added that the Executive Director and staff of ActionAid are accountable to the people whose funds the organization have received and to show credibility to its donors.

Based as they approved the plans and budget and to make sure that their program are aligned with the vision and mandate of ActionAid.

The representative from European Union delegation, Mr. Julius LK Foday Esq in his statement premised that no one wants to be accountable, adding that if ActionAid is communicating the funds then the project has to be visible. He said as stakeholders they should ensure to monitor the process in achieving the expected result. Outcome planning and budgeting go in line with what is expected as an outcome.

He confirmed that ActionAid has been a long time partner with the European Union since 2009 and, he has been working with ActionAid since 2013 to present and has monitored their implementations in almost all their intervention areas.

He added that the key strength of ActionAid is that they are people focus as one hardly knows the difference between ActionAid workers and the community beneficiaries as it was demonstrated during his last visit to ActionAid sites at Kambia.

Mr. Foday noted that ActionAid throughout this period has consistently and constantly being supported by the EU through competitive means.

He noted that the process will not end but a starting point in terms of having credible partnership.

He noted that over the years, ActionAid has been calling on EU during their annual plans and budget presentation, a move that he said must be replicated by similar NGOs to openly discuss their budgets and plans with the beneficiaries,

strengthen people's resilience. Some 40,000 women, men, and children in Sierra Leone, where four out of five households have irregular access to safe and nutritious food. "Sierra Leone imports a large quantity of its food, and with the global food and fuel crisis, compounded by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, poor households have not been spared" said Yvonne Forsen, WFP's Country Representative and Director

"Inflation has also meant that people now buy fewer commodities from their income, which is increasing hunger levels. "With the new funding, WFP will provide emergency cash transfers to the worst-hit communities, expand homegrown school feeding and support agricultural efforts to

development and we are encouraged that this funding will benefit entire communities including school children and small-scale farmers," the American Ambassador, David Reimer, said. "This contribution underscores our desire to invest in the local economies through school feeding and the highly nutritious sweet potato directly from small-scale farmers for 6,400 children. WFP will also provide agricultural equipment for small-scale farming communities and Mother Support Groups in Falaba, Koinadugu, Tonkolili, Kambia, Moyamba and Pujehun districts to clear more land, process rice and produce feed for poultry enterprises. Some 95 farmer groups managing Village Loans and Savings (VLS) schemes will receive training in financial management. "The United States of America is committed to supporting all the people of Sierra Leone in achieving human

over 75 percent of their incomes on food. # Nations World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change. Follow us on Twitter @wfp\_media @WFPs\_Leone For more information please contact (email address: firstname.lastname@wfp.org) :Francis Boima, WFP/Freetown, Mob. +232 88 225 914 Lydia WamalaPartnerships, Communications and Reports Officer/WFP in Sierra Leone 6A Renner Drive, off Wilkinson Road, FreetownT +232.99.273.840 (M, whats app) lydia.wamala@wfp.org www.wfp.org/countries/sierra-leoneTwitter: @WFPs\_Leone @lidiawamala

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## THE UNITED STATES SUPPORT WFP'S RESPONSE AS HIGH FOOD PRICES INCREASE HUNGER IN SIERRA LEONE FREETOWN

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over 75 percent of their incomes on food. # Nations World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change. Follow us on Twitter @wfp\_media @WFPs\_Leone For more information please contact (email address: firstname.lastname@wfp.org) :Francis Boima, WFP/Freetown, Mob. +232 88 225 914 Lydia WamalaPartnerships, Communications and Reports Officer/WFP in Sierra Leone 6A Renner Drive, off Wilkinson Road, FreetownT +232.99.273.840 (M, whats app) lydia.wamala@wfp.org www.wfp.org/countries/sierra-leoneTwitter: @WFPs\_Leone @lidiawamala

## ActionAid Hands Over New School To Rosengbeh

By Alhassan Spear Kamara

What has been described as a laudable development aimed at ensuring that school going children in Rosengbeh Village in the Tane Chiefdom Tonkolili District get the required education under the free quality education ActionAid Sierra Leone handed over the weekend a newly constructed six classrooms building. The building contains Toilet facilities, water well and an equipped Library with IT Equipments to the Catholic family proprietors St. Peter's Catholic Junior Secondary school in Rosengbeh with funds from British Grace and Pekins. The couple has been very helpful to the Tonkolili district for the past 10 years extending humanitarian assistance to the poverty stricken residents. The ceremony which took place at the school campus attracted stakeholders in Tonkolili including representatives of the host paramount chief, Tonkolili district Council MBSSSE, Teaching Service Commission, Free Quality education and Board Members from AASL office. Giving his keynote address the executive director AASL, Foday Bassie Swaray thanked the people of Rosengbeh for their support towards the completion of the project and encouraged them to take great care of the properties. He revealed that his organisation implemented the project and commended the donors Grace and Pekins for rescuing the people of Rosengbeh. The various speakers commended AASL and in particular the donors; Grace and Pekins for their intervention



## 4 The Nature Newspaper Friday 17th March 2023 GLOBAL FOUNDATION AWARDS AMAZING WOMEN



To commemorate this year's International Women's Day, the Global Foundation for Women and Development on Saturday 11 March 2023 organized an awards night at the Bannet Hotel, Aberdeen in Freetown at which six eminent and amazing Sierra Leonean women who chose to make a difference in the country were recognized and awarded with medals.

The theme for the event was 'Embracing Equity'.

Mrs. Valencia Coker, proprietress of Valencia Catering Services and Vocational School, Ms. Saffie Kabbok, a civil servant, Mrs. Marian Vinnie-Wilson, a senior staff at Statistics Sierra Leone received medals for their hard work, outstanding and meritorious service to the country in various capacities.

leadership and rural development and was once Deputy General Manager of the Sierra Leone Ports Authority. He has also served in various organisations dealing with women and children. Mr. Kargbo is a certified Global Project Manager with certifications from the Project Management Institute in the United States.

In her statement, Dr. Margaret Konima Sesay acclaimed eminent Sierra Leonean women who have excelled against all odds for which they must be celebrated daily, underscored that they have climbed the mountains, that they are champions and have paved the way for others reiterating that they have made a difference in the country, that she started the awards ceremony in 2016 and underlined that Sierra Leonean women are resilient.

Giving an update on the 'Lappa to apron' initiative, Dr. Margaret Konima Sesay revealed that the organisation is changing from 'LAPPA TO APRON' in market places in Sierra Leone to promote public health and is optimistic that the initiative would foster good hygiene practices, food safety and also promote public health in market places.

She recalled that the 'LAPPA TO APRON' project was launched in Poteva, Barrie Chiefdom, Southern Province of Sierra Leone on 31 December 2022, intimating that the market women in Poteva have for the first time started wearing aprons, that an estimated 700 aprons have been donated to market women and men selling in the following markets: Poteva Town, Njala, Makonde (NEX), Congo Town, Wilberforce, Aberdeen Road, Blackhall Road and Malama Thomas Street supported by family and friends in Sierra Leone, UK, USA and U.S. She also commended Reverend Joseph Joseph and Mrs. Maria Tucker of the Sawyer family, Mod & Hamana Sesay, Iscandari for Bismarck Davies family, Luk family, Bishop Samuel Ghonda family, Mr. Melvin and Mrs. F. Tucker & family, Mrs. Frances J. D. and Mrs. David Khanu & family, Mrs. Yalish Coker and family, Mrs. Alica Kamara & family, Ms. Akaki, Mrs. Victoria Kargbo & family, Mrs. Jana Mokuowa, Ms. Beat Kuyateh, Haja Fatu Yunkella-Saw & family, Dr. Robert Mokuowa, Foday Britina Sawi & family, Ms. Sawi and Do-Mosaki, Mr. and Rashid Sesay & family and Mr. & Mahmood Kamara.

Highlights of the event were presentation of medals to awardees, the dinner and donation of aprons to various parts in Freetown and other parts of the country and pledges amounting to million Leones.

Some of the women of excellence made pledges were Mrs. Marian Nelson-Williams and Mrs. M. Peacock-fabrics respectively, Fatima Koroma and Mrs. Si Zookong.

Beneficiaries of the aprons acclaime the initiative which they stress cannot be overstated as they can do their business and still remain clean, neat and tidy, keep their men and other variables in the pos provided in the aprons and app for more aprons.

## ActionAid-SL Urges Government for Zero Emission Rat

Executive Director of ActionAid Sierra Leone Foday Swaray has on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 urged the government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to ensure zero emission rates of green-house-gases (GHG) that is polluting the environment and affect the climate change in the country.

He made this appeal during the presentation of the Climate Change Convergence Communique to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Prof. Foday Moriba Jaward at his Wilkinson Road Office in Freetown.

ActionAid and their partners are asking government and development partners to put certain measures in place to address the negative effects of climate change and environmental damage.

Mr. Swaray continued that the communique reflects the perspectives of all the members present at the convergence learning and sharing on climate change impact communities in Sierra Leone.

He highlighted some of the areas the government should pay keen interest such as cancellation of current debt repayment owned by Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to annex the countries of the United Nations Financing Climate Change (UNFCCC) so that those monies shall be channelled for climate change resilient, adaptation and mitigation actions.

Also the country should stop the importation of environment-depleting substances such as fertilisers, pesticides, chemicals and support the investment inorganic manure and non-environment-depleting practices in LDCs, especially countries like Sierra Leone and capacity building and research as resource form to increase the use of technologies and innovation for addressing climate change challenges.

In his remarks the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Prof. Foday Moriba Jaward highlighted the bold step the government has taken to establish his ministry and some of the things they have achieved within the shortest possible time.

Noting some of the challenges the country is facing such as changing rainfall patterns, massive deforestation and blocking of our drainages with solid waste among others to address these challenges his ministry together with its supervisory agencies have reviewed the obsolete laws and set up environment court which the lawyers and judges have been trained to impose punishment on law offenders on the environment.

He furthered that as a responsible government they want to ensure people do the right things in the environment that would be conducive for all.

The Minister pointed out the ongoing project of his ministry that is planting of 2.6 million trees, which they have already planted 2.6 million trees. According to him, all trees planted were funded by government. In the area of loss-damage which is one of the action plan of ActionAid and its partners he said funding is now available for it as a push for it during the last COP27 Egypt.



## Actionaid Supports Marginalized Adolescent Girls In Freetown



With funds from Actionaid UK, Actionaid SL in its continued strides to support the marginalized especially girls in deprived and neglected communities in different parts of the country under the project name 'Action to Empower Marginalized Girls' (AEMAG), on Tuesday March 28th 2023 provided start-up kits and learning materials to adolescent girls (out of school and in school) in Western Area at a symbolic ceremony held at the Sir Alfred Jones Hall, Dockyard in Freetown.

Students from Tailoring, hair dressing, catering departments received start-up kits and those attending normal school classes received learning materials and dignity kits including sanitary pads for the adolescents.

Actionaid is operating in seven districts and seventeen communities in the country and the latest programme is a continuation of same that took place in Bo recently, according to the Actionaid's Country Director Mr. Foday Bassie Swaray. The event attracted its implementing partners including Women In Crisis Movement (WICM-SL) and Tree of Life Skills Training Center.

The programme, according to the Country Director, has one main objective which encompasses girls to have access to quality education,

acquire skills and provide them with social justice. "We're doing this in line with government's pronouncement that girls, no matter their position or condition should have equal access to quality education," Mr. Swaray insists. "Girl Poken for betch," he reiterated severely.

He said the NGO has invested hugely in Sierra Leone towards education, water and sanitation among others. He said they have built sixteen schools in Freetown alone in different communities and that they even want to do more but held by lack of lands.

The Country Director said they're making these sacrifices to promote and protect the girls who, he said, are facing mounting challenges/barriers in their respective communities including but not limited to early child marriage.

As words of caution to both beneficiaries and their parents, Mr. Swaray admonished the former to defy all the odds and take their work seriously in order to become independent/self-reliant. To the latter, parents, community leaders and other stakeholders, he insisted that they do everything possible to make their respective communities safe for girls, given that Actionaid and its implementing partners have done so much in that regard.

In conclusion he disclosed that Actionaid (NL45R3-960) about (NL45R3-960,000M) was used to provide those items.

Executive Director for one of the implementing organizations Women In Crisis, Rev. Mrs. Juliana Koteh said Sierra Leonean women have continued to suffer, but thank God for the vision He gave her to help them. "We want to see Sierra Leonean children to leave the back and come to the front because we want everyone to be happy together. She commended Actionaid for its relentless support it has continued to give to these marginalized children over long period of time.

She disclosed that the NGO has built many schools, water wells among others and called on government to collaborate with Actionaid to help deprived communities. "Nothing can bring joy without putting smiles on the faces of these deprived children," she added and called on the beneficiaries to make more effort to be educated.

She encouraged the parents not to sell the items using hardship as an excuse and prayed that 'Salome will develop so that nobody will look upon her'.

Like her counterpart, Rev. Mrs. Sylvia Cole Proprietor for Tree of Life skills training center another implementing agency that caters for young girls in difficulties also praised Actionaid for



## 5 The Nature Newspaper Friday 17th March 2023

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Theme: "Digital: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality"

Symposium - On Wealth Tax for Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality

9th March, 2023

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