



Projects Report

Jim Hanson, Committee Chair

Our projects in Sierra Leone are still going strong in spite of the current pandemic. Although donations were down a little last year, FoSL was still able to fund three projects in December of 2020, and two more in June of this year. Then, on November 5, a fuel tanker collided with a lorry in Wellington, causing a huge explosion and fire, killing over 140 people and injuring many more. Our members responded immediately, donating over \$6000 for victims and their families. Within a few days, Street Child staffers were putting those funds to work in Sierra Leone to aid those affected by this terrible accident.

Our projects from last December include the Kamande Agricultural Project in Jedia, near Kabala. This women's group was granted \$2950 to purchase cassava processing equipment. They went right to work and have a growing business selling garri products in the local markets.



FOSL Vice-President Aiah Fanday Honored in Washington

On Saturday October 6 2021, the International House of Prayer Ministries honored **Aiah Fanday** with their 2021 Community Service Award.

Aiah was quoted as saying "On behalf of my family I would like to thank God for His Grace and thank the community I serve and Pastor Komba Mani and the International House of Prayers Ministries for the recognition. I remain humble and thankful for this honor."

continued page 5 - Award

Two projects received funds in Kailahun District, where agriculture is their main source of employment. The Golden Drop Investment Project is teaching beekeeping skills to local farmers around Borbu Town. FoSL provided them \$2500 for training sessions and support, and for the construction of traditional beehives. Beekeeping provides additional income to farmers outside of the traditional growing season. One Village Partners received \$500 to help with the construction of drying floors and a rice store in the village of Megbema.

The Daphne Sawyer-Dunn Memorial Scholarship Fund once again provided \$250 to the Paul School for the Blind to aid needy student in the Bo area.

We recently received feedback and photos from 3 projects funded in 2020. The Women's Empowerment Group in Kakama, located between Bo and Kenema, was granted \$2896 for a well to provide clean drinking water to the Gary Schulze Orphanage, which houses some 25 children who lost their parents during the Ebola outbreak.

The Mapaki Village in Bombali District received \$2988 to construct a two-room primary school. The recent photo shows students and teachers proudly standing in front of their new school.

The Kasankarie Farmer's Association in Maharibo, near Kamakwie, was granted \$2000 for their junior secondary school project. But, in a familiar complaint during this pandemic, they had problems with the contractors showing up to do the work. The project is now proceeding but they have not yet provided a photo of the finished school.

The projects committee is currently in the process of evaluating 19 applications received in October. Our popularity with small communities is attracting more applicants each year. The good news is

that we have over \$10,000 in our budget to fund these projects, with those selected for funding being announced in mid-December. Thank you all for your continued support and we welcome all new contributions, large and small, to continue aiding our friends in Sierra Leone. And lastly, I would like to extend a big thank you to our committee members, who make all of this possible.

Water Well Completed in Gary Schulze Orphanage Center

Kakama Village

The Kakama Village Project from Friends of Sierra Leone for a water well with hand pump at the Gary Schulze Orphanage Center has been completed and the water system is now running. These are some of the pictures, after the digging and fixing of the hand pump.



Kagbanka School



The School and community of Kagbanka Bana are profoundly happy to report that the School Project has been concluded and the building is currently serving Kagbanka and its environs. We want to continue to thank you and FOSL for your dedication and commitment to serving Mama Salone, may God richly bless you all. Above is a photo of the building and members of the school.

Warmest regards, Foday Sesay - Headmaster

Maharibo School

Following the pressure mounted on the contractors on the construction of the school building project, members of Maharibo community are pleased to report that we are now making progress on the construction work. This is as a result of strategies the building committee has put in place. We hope to give you the final report soon when the building is completed. Below is some of the development that has taken place.

Yours sincerely, David Baibureh Bangura



Kamande Agricultural Project

Greetings again from KAP. We are grateful to FOSL for making it possible for us to reach these levels so far. Please extend our sincere greetings and appreciation to the Board of FoSL. We are hoping that this friendship will continue and work together in the near future, thanks.

In our strive to reduce hunger, poverty and to create jobs and employment for women and youth through our cassava production and processing project with support from Friends of Sierra Leone, we were able to acquire some garri processing machines, provide training for members on garri processing, packaging and labeling in our own brand (logo).

Furthermore, we were also working to build our processing space with mud bricks and mortar.

Despite the delay that was involved in the building work of our processing space, we were able to complete from the foundation to a wall high level, and the building work of our processing center and store is still on-going. (more images on pages 13,14)

Best Regard,
Madam Worokia Koroma
Chair KAP Team
Jedia community Kabala
Koinadugu District, Northern Province, Sierra Leone.



**YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS
HAVE FUNDNED NUMEROUS
FoSL SMALL GRANT PROJECTS**

Past Projects Funded:
fosalone.org/projFunded.php

Donate:
fosalone.org/donate.php

Announcements

For those who are looking for friends you've lost contact with or who have an announcement others may be interested in, this is your place to post it. Please email your request to Peggy at info@fosalone.org. Announcements regarding marriages, births, new jobs, deaths, or any other item of interest are welcome. Keep in mind newsletters usually come out twice a year.

Donald Lu appointed

On September 13, the U.S. Senate confirmed the nomination of Salone RPCV **Donald Lu** (Health, 1988-90) to be **Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia**.



In Remembrance



Joy Elaine Marburger of Chesterton, IN and East Palatka, FL passed away on Monday, July 19, 2021. She was born on December 21, 1946.

Joy taught science and art in Moyamba 1969-72. She was a passionate advocate for science and the environment and engaged in both local and international science community outreach. (read more: www.ee-fh.com/obituaries/Joy-Marburger/)

Thank you to all who shared information.

Aiah has been a beacon of community and humanitarian service in the Sierra Leonean Community for years. He served as Kono Union President for six years. Currently, he is Chairman of the Kono District Global Organization, KDGO, and Vice President of Friends of Sierra Leone. In politics, he is the Founder of the Coalition for Change C4C Political Party and the current Global Chair for C4C.

As a humanitarian, Aiah has sponsored students from different backgrounds in Sierra Leone. Currently, he's sponsoring a handicapped girl, Isha Koroma, in Lunsar, a blind boy from Kabala, Peter Mansaray, who's currently being sponsored by Aiah to attend the blind school in Freetown and Marie Kalokoh in Makeni, a young lady with special needs.

As Chairman of the Kono District Global Organization, the organization is currently operating the Kono District Global Organization Primary School, in Titambaya Township, Gbense Chiefdom.

Aiah is a graduate of the Prince of Wales Secondary School in Freetown and received a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland.

FoSL Statement of the Tanker Explosion

The Friends of Sierra Leone (FoSL) wishes to extend our heartfelt compassion to the families and friends of the victims of the NP tanker explosion at PMB Wellington. We are deeply shocked and saddened to learn of the deaths and injuries caused by the explosion.

We are in mourning along with our families, friends, and loved ones in Sierra Leone. We take this sad occasion to offer the families who lost loved ones our deepest condolences and most sincere sympathy. Our thoughts and prayers also go out to the many who suffered injuries from the incident.

All life is sacred and it is upsetting to see the devastating impact that this tragedy has had on all Sierra Leoneans. Our very best wishes to everyone affected by this tragedy.

To all Sierra Leoneans and Friends of Sierra Leone, this one really hit us hard. We ask that we stay united and work in harmony for the sake of the victims.

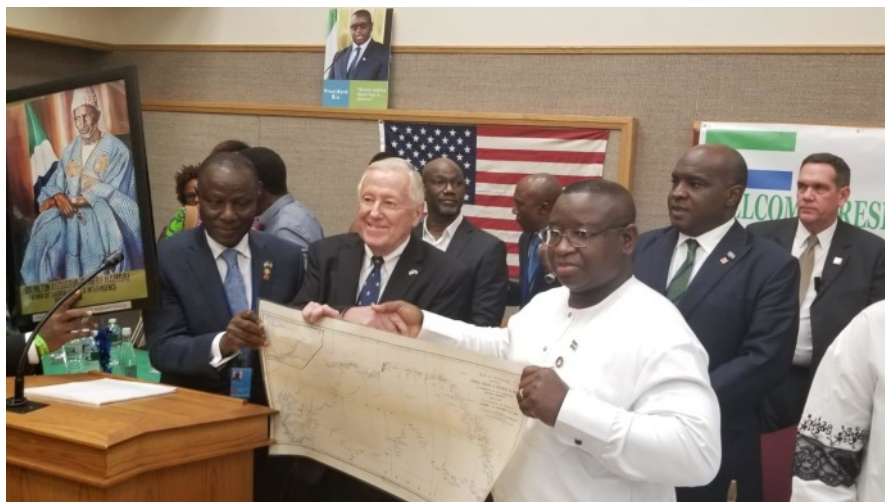
With sympathy from FoSL Members World Wide

Historic Relics Presented to President Bio

In the years prior to Independence many senior Sierra Leone military officers were sent to the United Kingdom for advanced training at the prestigious Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. About twenty years ago Gary Schulze purchased a metal shield which hung in the dining room at Sandhurst for many years. It shows a lion and palm tree, the symbol which represented the Sierra Leonean officers who trained there. Each of the then British colonies in West Africa - Nigeria, the Gold Coast (later Ghana) and the Gambia had their own shields. When President Julius Maada Bio visited Washington, DC last September Gary presented the shield to him gift for the Sierra Leone National Museum. It was the second presentation he made to him in the past two years. Last year, Sierra Leone and Guinea were embroiled in a border dispute over the diamond-producing town of Yenga.



Guinean troops had fought the RUF in Yenga and stayed on mining diamonds once the war ended. Guinea claimed the town belonged to them. He found the original 1895 map produced by the Anglo-French Border Commission which clearly showed that Yenga belonged to Sierra Leone. Gary presented the map to President Bio and it helped resolve the dispute.



Amazon Smile

As a reminder to all Friends of Sierra Leone supporters, if you choose to shop with Amazon by using their "Amazon Smile" program, a small percentage (0.5%) of your purchase will be donated to FoSL.

Simply use this address to get to Amazon: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1732179>

Don't be surprised to see FoSL registered by its original name - Greater Washington FoSL

Donations directly to FoSL are also greatly appreciated: <http://fosalone.org/donate.php>

Thanks for supporting FoSL



RPCV Voices: Meeting the Unique Needs of Child Refugees

By: Suzy Khachaturyan (RPCV Sierra Leone 12-14)

Refugee resettlement is inherently a challenging, sometimes even traumatic, process during which refugees begin their lives in their country of resettlement. During the early weeks and months of the process job skills are learned, health needs are assessed, children are enrolled in school, and English learning takes on heightened importance.

Refugee adults take on most of these tasks. However, children frequently play a critical role in supporting their parents. This happens because children tend to learn the language more quickly than their parents through the language immersion they experience at school and because children tend to learn languages more quickly than adults. The critical role that children take might include helping at the grocery store checkout counter, interpreting communication from school and at parent teacher conferences, as well as any public interaction that requires English and/or cultural knowledge - that is, roles children don't typically play when their parents have fluency, or even proficiency, in the dominant language that's spoken.

The critical skill of English proficiency, even the level acquired in a short time by

a young child, can prove to be a major asset for a refugee family, but it can come at a cost. By serving in roles that adults typically serve, child refugees risk missing out on the opportunity to be children, free from responsibility and worry. This is known in academia as "early adulthood".

Supporting the unique needs of child and adolescent refugees, and the U.S.-born children of refugees, is critical. These children, and to a large extent children of new immigrant families in general, face a myriad of unique challenges in their school, home, and community lives. But the good news is that the adults in their lives—parents, relatives, teachers, mentors, and friends—can support them as they navigate the challenges inherent with childhood and adolescence in addition to the challenges unique to their family.

This support can take on many forms, depending on what role you play in your community. Expressing interest in the language(s) spoken in their home and asking what foods their family makes at home and encouraging them to talk about it can prove to be the powerful reassurance they need. You might ask about their family's traditions, like what holidays they observe and how they mark the occasion. By asking questions (respectfully) and expressing genuine curiosity, refugee children learn that their family's culture, language, food, and history are important and have inherent value. It encourages them to learn it on their own by asking questions at home, reflecting on it, and identifying potential conflicts between their family's culture and the dominant one in their new community. It also demonstrates to them that it's okay, even good, to be different,

that their family's culture is something to embrace and be proud of. Because at the end of the day, children want to fit in and be accepted, and that's difficult to do when your home life is, or seems, completely different from that of anyone you know. Refugee children need assurance that their family's cultural identity/identities may make them different but that difference is respected and valued.

Refugee children are in many ways more susceptible than adults to the pressures of assimilation, whereby family culture is lost in favor of the dominant culture of their new country or community. Instead, integrating into the new environment by preserving their family's culture within the larger society, much like pieces of a puzzle coming together, where there is respect and acceptance of cultural differences is what enriches and strengthens communities. Refugee children need additional support and nurturing from adults and children alike, both from their family and in their new community, to be able to explore, understand, and accept their own multicultural identities. Schools therefore have the potential to provide a great refuge for children while they gain familiarity with their new community, by providing a sense of safety and stability in the face of major upheaval and potential trauma they may be grappling with.

Teachers, school administrators, school counselors, social workers, and other school staff play a critical role in the acculturation process for refugee children, and this can have a transformational impact on the whole family's resettlement experience by allowing them to build a support system with the school, get connected to resources in the community, learn coping skills, begin to build social capital, and more.

If you don't serve in of these roles,

however, there are still many opportunities to support refugee children during the resettlement process and well beyond. By serving as a family mentor, youth volunteer, or similar position with your local resettlement agency or other refugee-serving organization, you can play a key role in the child and family's life in much the same way.

The best way to do this is to connect with a refugee resettlement organization in your area, if you haven't already. If one is not near you, or if you want to take an additional step, there is also a great need for support well after the resettlement process is over, in which case other nonprofit support services typically take over to provide ongoing, typically area-specific services such as housing, or employment assistance. If you're unfamiliar you can to find organizations in your area.

Suzy Khachatryan is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Sierra Leone 2012-2014), former child refugee, and long-time volunteer in various refugee and immigrant communities.



Reading the FoSL newsletter is **Jacob Jusu Saffa**, Chief Minister who also oversees the Ministry of Finance

Then and Now

Peggy Murrah

In the past I would write about trips to Sierra Leone or trips to annual meetings, Obviously, those options are not available due to Covid. However, I still have a couple of trips to write about and, yet another, disastrous loss of life in Salone.

First is the tanker explosion that killed in excess of 100 people and cost an untold number their source of financial support. Additionally, I can't imagine how many children for all intents and purposes became orphans that day. In the developed world, everyone impacted would have been at the very least connected to the appropriate government agency for immediate assistance and support. In Sierra Leone, that would be a connection to the appropriate NGO. Since FoSL has no on the ground presence in Salone, we opted, once again, to work through Street Child, an international NGO that started in Sierra Leonel but has spread to other countries over the past several years. And, once again, Street Child agreed to use 100% of our donations toward the survivors of the explosion, Several of our board members have visited Street Child's work with our past donations for the mudslide and we were quite impressed. As in that situation, we have funded their work in feeding people immediately, setting up business people who lost their income due to the explosion and fire, and getting children back in school. We set a goal of \$6000 and at last count had surpassed that by several hundred dollars. Our members never fail to step up when it matters. Thank you so much to those who contributed. If you want to contribute, please do so.

In September, I was invited to Boston to attend an event for President Bio. In addition, FoSL board member and RPCV/ US Ambassador to Sierra Leone and FoSL member Dave Magani were both invited as well. In addition to representing FoSL

at the event, I wanted to meet with the Minister of Education, Dr. David Sengeh in hopes that we could discuss the construction of a youth center in the Bo or Njala area. FoSL has a donor, but we need an organization to take possession of the facility after we build it. My hope is to attach it to a teacher training college for mutual benefit between the college and the youth in the community. If you think you can help facilitate our plan, please contact me.



1980 Brian & Peggy at Coker's in Bo

In October and November, I was lucky enough to make a trip to Ireland and Italy. While on the surface you may wonder why I would include this in a newsletter from Friends of Sierra Leone, but there is a very clear answer. First, one of my best friends from my Peace Corps days happened to be an Irish priest, Father Brian Starcken. Brian and I were very good



2021 Brian & Peggy in Dublin, Ireland

friends and I still count him amongst the most influential people I have ever known. I was able to meet up with Brian in Dublin and travel a bit in the Irish interior with him. The days of CUSO, VSO, PC, and other expat groups remain a large part of my memories of Salone. It was so reaffirming to spend time with someone from my life in Salone.



Besides Ireland, I was fortunate enough to spend some time in Italy. Surprisingly, only after I was in Genoa, Italy, I realized that one of the very first PCVs to return to Salone after the war was living in Milan and I was scheduled to be there in a few days. I had been in contact with Meghan

Wise when she was Meghan Welsh before she had ever reached Sierra Leone. And, I felt somewhat responsible for her being there since Judy Figi, Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn, and I had spent time on the Hill, at the SL Embassy, and the Peace Corps DC headquarters making sure that the Peace Corps returned to Sierra Leone. Meghan ended up returning to Sierra Leone as part of the State Department a few years later and there she met Ahmed Wise, her soul mate. They are now the parents of three beautiful children. I had a wonderful evening with that warm, loving family and it was undoubtedly one of the highlights of my trip.

Seeing Brian and Meghan and her beautiful family made me stop and think about how much my Peace Corps days had impacted my life beyond Sierra Leone. Among my dearest friends are those I made in Sierra Leone including those not from Sierra Leone. What a deficit would be in my life had I not been a Peace Corps Volunteer. My Sierra Leonean family, the Gbories, and my friends from my time there have made it more meaningful. Thank you to all who have graced my life.

Report on Friends of Sierra Leone Business Meeting

By Susan Shepler

On Tuesday, the 19th of October, FOSL tried something new. The annual business meeting was held on zoom. In addition to members of the board, about a dozen people from the general membership were present as well with up to 28 people participating from all over the U.S. (and one in Brazil).

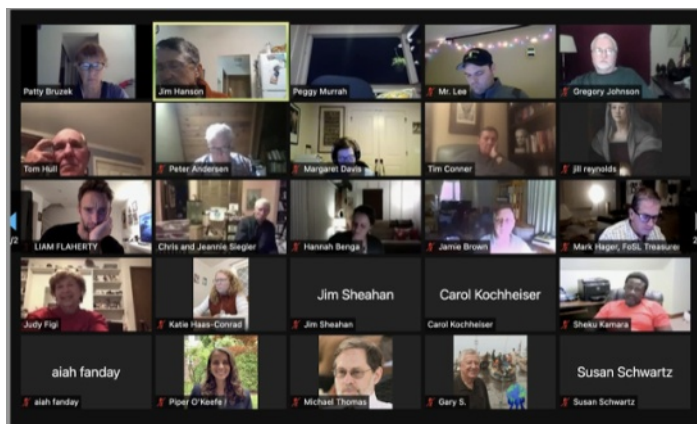


The first half hour of the two-hour long meeting was taken up with introductions everyone present. The board went first; each one giving name, board position, and when and where they served in Sierra Leone. Then the rest of the participants introduced themselves. It was lovely and amazing to have people present who served in the sixties, seventies, eighties, and up until just a few years ago. In addition to RPCVs, there were several Sierra Leonean members present as well as other people who have worked in Sierra Leone in some capacity. Thomas Hull, the former U.S. ambassador to Sierra Leone as well as a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Sierra Leone, was in attendance.

After introductions, the treasurer and various committee chairs made their reports: Advocacy, Annual Meeting, Education, Fundraising, Membership, and Website.

Some of the highlights are:

- There are 154 current members of FOSL with 1051 members and former members.
- Over 180 people paid annual dues in 2020.
- The advocacy committee is waiting to hear when PC will return to Sierra Leone.



In the area of projects, primarily due to COVID, FOSL was not able to carry out all of its usual activities during the past year. As a result, in both administrative and project budgets, income was greater than

expenditure. Over \$22,000 was spent on projects during the past year, supporting schools, agricultural projects, a beekeeping group, and an orphanage. \$7000 went to the NGO Street Child for a handwashing campaign to prevent COVID. Perhaps the highlight of the committee presentations was a video and several pictures from groups in Sierra Leone that received FOSL project funding. The people-to-people connection was clear in the images of women processing garri for sale, for example.

President Peggy Murrah made a plea for more people to join in committee work, the life blood of the association. The education committee is looking for people interested in supporting education in Sierra Leone or in engaging in various “third goal” activities domestically. There is always a need for people to join the fundraising committee.

At the end of the meeting, a drawing was held in which five attendees were selected to receive a Sierra Leone - U.S. friendship lapel pin. Thank you to all who worked behind the scenes to make the meeting work and thank you to all the attendees.

<https://fosalone.org/donate.php>



Meeting with Salone President and Ministers

Peggy Murrah, FoSL president, traveled to Boston Sept. 18 at the invitation from the Sierra Leone Embassy to attend a meet and greet event with Sierra Leone President **H.E. Maada Bio** and **Fatima Bio**, his wife. It was great to see them both. She was able to meet **Dr. David Sengeh**, the Minister of Education and **Mr. Jacob Saffa**, the Chief Minister. Also attending were **Tom Hull**, previous US Ambassador to SL and **David Magnani**, both of whom are returned volunteers who served in SL. Ambassador Hull is also a board member for FoSL. Great to see them both. She represented Friends of Sierra Leone and was delighted that the organization was singled out and recognized!



H.E. Maada Bio



Fatima Bio



© Nations Online Project

Piper O'Keefe

new FoSL board member

Friends of Sierra Leone is proud to announce Piper O'Keefe as our new fund raising committee chair. Additionally Piper will assist Michael Lee with social media.

Piper is originally from Fleetwood, PA, and graduated from Gettysburg College in 2017. After graduating, she joined the Peace Corps and was a secondary English teacher in Masingbi, Tonkolili district from 2017-2019. She then extended her service for a year to work closely with Peace Corps Salone staff/admin as the Volunteer Leader. For her extension year, she lived in Port Loko city and taught literacy at multiple junior secondary schools. In both of her sites, Piper spoke Themne and was known as "Saffie Sesay Turray" in the community and "Miss Piper" in school. She had to close her service three months early due to the COVID evacuation. After COSing and spending some quality quarantine time with her family, she has been in New Haven, CT, pursuing her Masters of Global Affairs and public policy (MPP) degree at Yale as a Peace Corps Coverdell Fellow. Through Coverdell, she is applying the skills she learned as a PCV by interning/volunteering with New Haven Reads, an amazing local organization dedicated to "sharing the joy and power of reading." Piper will graduate in May 2022 and recently found out that she was selected as a Presidential Management Fellow finalist. With that fellowship, she is in the process of applying for U.S. federal agency positions related to development or foreign policy.



FoSL would like to welcome her to the board and we look forward to working with and learning from Piper!

Garri Production by Kamande Agricultural Project



Peeling, washing, and cleaning cassava tubers for processing



Roasting / frying garri by manual method



Garri roasting tray and cassava grating machine



Sieving garri by manual method



Harvesting Cassava



Labeling garri packages with our own brand by local method



Cassava slurry presser / manual de-watering machine

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