

Project Sierra - A Family and a Future



Women and children often suffer most from the horrific legacy of war, said Alison Sutherland, International Project Liaison, when launching the new Quadrennial Project before a packed audience at Convention. Joining her on the platform were Rick Foulsham and Delia Pop from Hope and Homes for Children, and collectively they highlighted the significant IMPACT that SI, working in partnership with Hope and Homes for Children, will achieve over the next four years by raising a target of \$2 million to improve the quality of life and the future opportunities for families living in five communities located in Bo, Freetown, Kamakwie, Makeni, Mattru and Tambakha. The project will provide a caring family and a secure foundation in life to orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children and help women living in acute poverty.

Sierra Leone is ranked as the second poorest country in the world with 74% of the population living below the poverty line and surviving on less than \$2 USD a day. The average life expectancy is 42 years, half the population are under the age of 15 and nearly one in three children dies before the age of five. During the country's bloody 10-year civil war, more than half a million people were murdered, raped or mutilated. More than two million people had been left displaced and much of the infrastructure totally destroyed. During the conflict, thousands of children were abducted and separated from families. Boys were sent to kill as child soldiers and many girls were taken as sex slaves or 'bush wives'. The escalation of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis has further reduced the ability of many people to care for their families. Without a voice ringing loud and clear in the outside world, the people of Sierra Leone will continue to suffer. But through Project Sierra, they will be able to obtain greater security by working together to build more sustainable communities.

A number of dynamic programmes had already been developed by Hope and Homes for Children, in partnership with local communities, local leaders, children and parents. They include Young Mothers Support, Children Living Alone and Integrated Child and Family Support. Services will be delivered through a local Sierra Leone Agency, HANCI, and will facilitate sustainable economic support for families to provide for their basic needs, including education and access to primary health care

facilities.

This unique project really will make an IMPACT as a sustainable community development project that enables the local people to determine their own priorities and build capacities and skills within their local communities. It is also an excellent example of how SI is working to implement the eight Millennium Development Goals and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Alison said that she was looking forward to working closely with the Federation Quadrennial Liaison Officers over the next four years. Clubs will be provided with extensive resource material via the new website www.projectSIerra.org and encouraged to "Invest in the Future" by giving the families of SI Project SIerra Leone a real opportunity to fulfill their potential.

And £1,500 had already been raised during the Convention on the SI Project SIerra stand through the sale of badges and cards!

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