



SIERRA LEONE PROGRESS REPORT JULY 2015

Elizabeth's Legacy of Hope

Charity Number 1141287

“This is an opportunity in life for me; God is ready to make it up for me this time. I have so much hope from the programme and I know that one day I will make it.”

Mohamed, eighteen years old, about being part of the ELoH project

This report was written by Emilie Schultze, charity administrator at Elizabeth’s Legacy of Hope. The information was provided by Rebecca Newsom and Isabelle Trick, from Elizabeth’s Legacy of Hope, Tom Dannatt, from Street Child UK, and Kelfa Kargbo, Moses Kamara and their team, from Street Child Sierra Leone.

Front cover: Mohamed, 18, together with Rebecca Newsom, Chair of Trustees, Elizabeth’s Legacy of Hope (ELoH).

Mohamed had his leg amputated in a rebel attack on his village during Sierra Leone’s bloody civil war. In the war he was also separated from his family and friends, and he ended up living on the street, begging to survive. Mohamed was unable to go to school and receive the medical support he needed. In January 2012, he was identified as an ELoH beneficiary and he received a prosthetic leg, educational support, counselling and housing support. Mohamed has a long way to go but he is hopeful about his future, and he dreams of helping other amputees.

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Holistic Support to Child Amputees and their Families in Sierra Leone

In September 2012, Elizabeth's Legacy of Hope entered into a partnership with Street Child to provide vital medical, educational and livelihoods support for child amputees in Sierra Leone. Today, 147 children are enrolled and they are receiving long-term and holistic support which enables them to walk, go to school and lead active lives. The following report highlights the progress made up until June 2015.



Background

Child amputees are common in Sierra Leone and rarely receive the medical attention or education necessary to endow them with hope and the chance to get a job and support themselves in the future. For this purpose, the project aims to:

1) Provide access to prosthetic devices

and appropriate aftercare for 147 child amputees2) Increase access to educational opportunities and support independence

3) Respond to the psychosocial needs of our beneficiaries through counselling

4) Support our beneficiaries' integration into schools and communities

Progress to Date - Overview

The project in Sierra Leone is divided into three main phases:

Phase 1: full assessment of medical, educational and social needs; counselling and outreach to reduce stigma.

Phase 2: treatment of beneficiaries, including any operations required, measuring and fitting of prosthetics; enrolment of beneficiaries in school and provision of business grants to beneficiaries' families.

Phase 3: ongoing physical support, including physiotherapy, counselling and fitting of new prosthetics; monitoring of educational progress.

97 of our beneficiaries were enrolled in 2012 and are in phase 3 of the project. The remaining 50 children were enrolled in 2014 and are now in phase 2.

The project has great momentum, both in terms of strong demand from those we are supporting, and in terms of enthusiasm from staff, who are highly committed to delivering this project.

However, project implementation has inevitably been delayed in certain significant respects as a result of the deadly Ebola virus. The epidemic broke out in May 2014 and it has to date infected more than *13,280 people and killed 3,950*. It has also had severe social and economic costs and it will take a long time for the country to recover.

This has not prevented us from delivering the project however - but has, and will continue to cause various delays and changes, as schools, hospitals and other major public infrastructure have been closed or seriously restricted as part of the fight to curb the disease spreading.

Elizabeth's Legacy of Hope has provided additional [emergency funding](#) to help protect our beneficiaries and their families from this deadly illness.

To date, we have achieved the following:

School status and enrolment

All 147 beneficiaries are attending school. During the Ebola crisis schools were closed for 9 months, but after reopening on the 14th of April 2015 all children are back in school.

Prosthetics and medical support

Our new beneficiaries have had their medical assessments and they are in the process of receiving surgeries and prosthetic legs. Due to the stress the Ebola outbreak has put on Sierra Leone's health infrastructure, this has been the area where we have faced the greatest delays.

Our old beneficiaries have all received the first cycle of medical assessment, fitting of prosthetics and physiotherapy support. As they have grown, they have entered the second cycle of medical support new medical assessments and receiving surgeries and new prosthetics.

Counselling

Our beneficiaries are visited weekly by social workers, workshops are taking place to support the families, and significant progress has been made in helping our beneficiaries open up about the trauma they have faced.

Family Business Scheme

All our beneficiaries' families have received small business grants, alongside individual advice and training sessions. Their small businesses are picking up as restriction on economic activities are lifted.

ELOH Beneficiaries – Identification and medical care

All 147 beneficiaries have been identified successfully and enrolled in the programme. They come from four main locations in Sierra Leone and have been selected as suitable for the project based on their status as amputees and their level of vulnerability.

Children were identified through a series of approaches in recognition of the cultural stigma that often leaves children with amputations hidden from view. Social workers made addresses on radio in Sierra Leone, as well as working with community leaders to find those in most need of help.

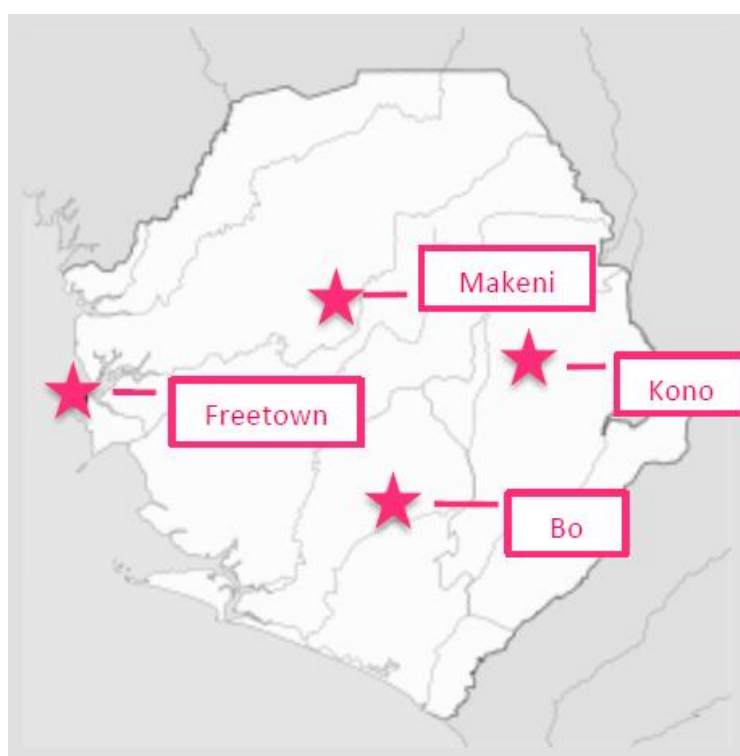
Whilst doing outreach, the team identified a large number of amputee children in Makeni, Bo and Kono. As a result these towns were picked as a strategic locations in addition to Freetown.

Today, the project has dedicated social workers in the four towns. Further, the project also receives support from the

wider team of our partner organisation Street Child's social workers and volunteers.

All 147 beneficiaries have received a full medical assessment by Dr. Monty Harding and his team. As a result, eight children have received surgeries to re-shape their stumps or treat dangerous bone protrusions. These interventions are crucial to enabling children to comfortably wear prosthetics. Another nine children will receive surgeries in the coming months. It is the project's top priority that those surgeries are delivered and that all children who need new prosthetics will be fitted as soon as possible.

With Sierra Leone almost being Ebola free, we are hopeful that the challenges created by the outbreak can be overcome and progress made on the necessary surgeries and the fitting of prosthetics imminently.



Sierra Leone is a country on the west coast of Africa with a population of just above 6 million. Our main locations are:

Freetown: the capital of Sierra Leone. It is a diverse city of 951,000 inhabitants.

Makeni: the largest city and of the Northern Province, with a population of 112,000.

Bo: the second largest city of Sierra Leone. It is located in the Southern Province and home to just above 300,000 people.

Kono: a district in the Eastern Province in Sierra Leone with a population of 350,000.

ELOH Beneficiaries

Our beneficiaries have received their amputations for a variety of reasons ranging from violence during the Sierra Leone civil war, to simple wounds that did not receive proper medical attention at the time they were sustained. Each child receives medical care according to the particular needs he or she has.

In addition, the social work component of the ELOH project recognises that each of the individual beneficiaries are likely to face individual barriers in their homes, in their education, and in combating their disabilities. Each beneficiary has access to a programme designed for their unique needs by social workers who know them personally.

“The ELOH project is one of the fastest growing projects within Street Child, both in relation to the number of beneficiaries, and the levels of our interventions. The beneficiaries are particularly satisfied with the swiftness of our responses to their needs and emergencies. These responses included the ways we have provided support to their educational and medical needs.” - Moses Kamara, Head of Mini Projects, Street Child Sierra Leone

Myenie



When Myenie was born, her parents were scared. Their little daughter had been born without a fully developed leg. Born into a small, impoverished community in the Lungi area, near Sierra Leone's capital Freetown, there was little hope that Myenie would ever be able to live a mobile and active life.

In May 2014, a local charity got in touch with ELOH and brought the case of

Myenie to our attention. Myenie became part of our Sierra Leone project as one of our youngest beneficiaries at just two years old.

In July 2014, Myenie and her mother visited our limb centre in Freetown and she received her first prosthetic leg. Her parents were scared that Myenie would never get up and walk, but after receiving her first prosthetic leg from ELOH, Myenie stood up and walked in the very first week! Her parents were delighted.

While it will take a little while for her to get used to it, receiving a prosthetic limb at such a young age is vital. Children learn to adapt to it quickly, and injuries and bad posture that often arise if no limb is available can be avoided.

Myenie's progress is continuously monitored and she will soon receive a new limb as part of the ELOH long-term medical support programme.

School Enrolment

UNICEF estimates that there are 233,000 children out of school in Sierra Leone. Without an intervention, these children are likely to struggle to escape poverty in their adult lives, and they have a higher likelihood of being unable to afford to educate their own children in the future.

Due in part to cultural stigmas, amputee children are at greater risk than the average children in Sierra Leone of not receiving an education.

With this background, education for our beneficiaries is a high priority. When the project began, a large majority of the children were not attending school. Accordingly, one of the most significant challenges faced by social workers was to ensure that they were all enrolled in, and attending, school at an appropriate level.

However, this task has been made all the more difficult due to the Ebola epidemic which resulted in a nine months national closure of schools.

Because child amputees are already at greater risk of dropping out of school

than their peers, social workers have had to work closely with families throughout the closure to ensure that, once schools reopen, all beneficiaries are ready and able to return.

On the 14th of April, schools re-opened in the country. All our beneficiaries' schools were judged safe to attend and all 147 children are now going to school.

The children are enrolled in various levels of schooling from nursery school through university level. Additionally, some students are enrolled in skills training courses, ranging from IT studies to vocational training as electricians and tailors.

Social workers remain engaged throughout the process to provide students with any necessary support. The children have also received school packages to further encourage their participation in school. The packages include notebooks, pencils, mathematical sets, bags and school uniforms.

EDUCATION LEVEL

	Freetown	Makeni	Bo	Kono	Total
Primary	10	25	12	14	61
Secondary	22	13	12	16	63
Tertiary	9	4	9	1	23
Total	41	42	33	36	147

Counselling and Emotional Support

The ELoH project in Sierra Leone is run by a team of trained social workers. A key element of the success of the project is the social worker's ability to engage with beneficiaries individually, in group, and with their families

Individual Counselling

Each child meets individually with a social worker as often as needed, but at least once per month.

Mary



Mary lost her arm when she was only 12 years old, after a brutal attack by the rebels during the Sierra Leone civil war. She was left on her own for forty days, hiding in the bushes.

Her father found her and brought her home, but for a long time Mary was suffering from pains in her arm. Her parents were also too poor to support her to go to school and Mary was devastated to not be able to go back.

Group Counselling

Group sessions are held weekly in each of the project locations. All of the beneficiaries are invited to attend group sessions which may be broken down into age and gender specific smaller groups.

Family Counselling

The social worker may determine it is necessary to spend some time with the family, on a case-by-case basis.

Luckily, one of ELoH's social workers got in touch with Mary and she was soon enrolled into the Makeni project. Here, she was able to receive adequate medical support and have her tuition fee paid for so she could go back to school.

"Mr Ezekiel (ELoH social worker) was helping me so greatly and I was so happy. I appreciate everything Mr Ezekiel has been doing for me. If not for him, if not for you people, I would not be where I am today".

Mary's parents have been given business support so they can continue paying for her studies. Mary is proud to be in the final year of school. Her aim is to study for a degree in Business Administration and to one day work at a bank.

If you want to hear more of Mary's inspiring story follow the link to [the filmed interview](#).

Family Business Scheme



Poverty is frequently identified as a barrier to a child accessing education.

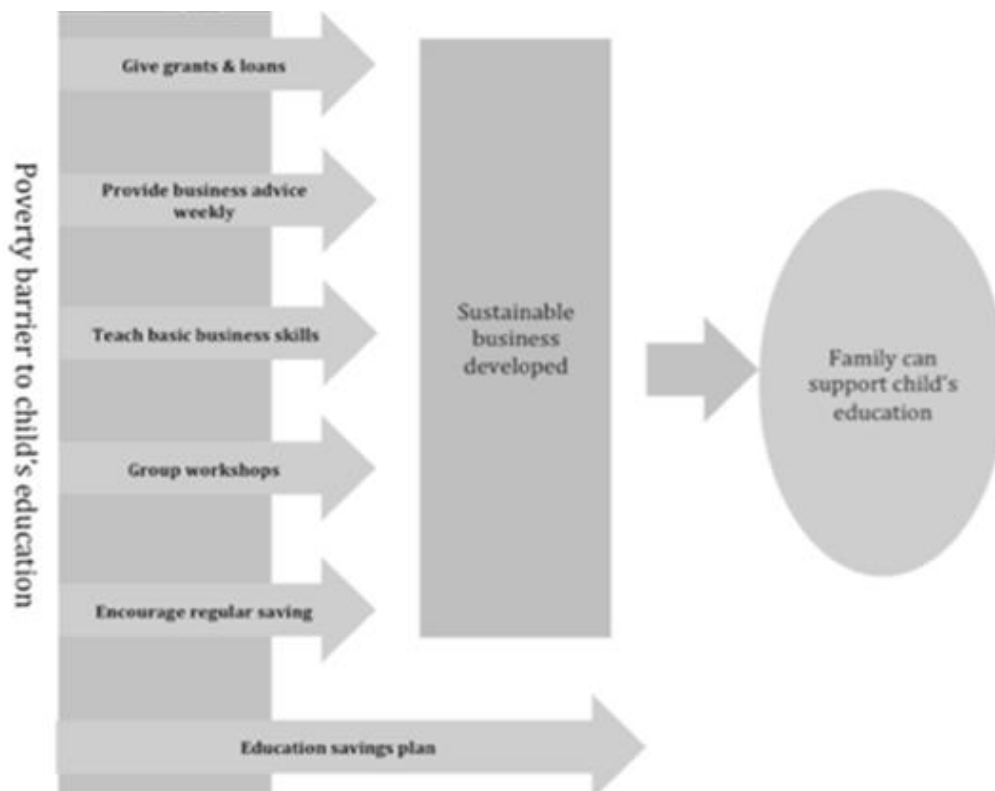
After a family has worked with our social workers for a while and trust has been established, they refer the families to our family business officers. The family business officers assist families to establish a small business that can adequately support their child. They offer support to each family through training and business advice, before making grants available.

Businesses supported through the scheme are diverse, and can be comprised of anything from tailoring, to running small local restaurants or market stalls.

A key element of the scheme is that families are encouraged to save regularly, increasing the chances that the businesses will grow and be able to provide for the entire family in the long run.

Our partner organisation Street Child has worked with hundreds of successful businesses since 2008 - years on, families previously too poor to send their children to school are now the owners of small but vibrant businesses.

All 147 beneficiary families have been enrolled in the family business scheme and have received their grants and attended business trainings. In addition to the group trainings, they have received individual assessments and advice to build sustainable businesses.



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