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International

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JULY 2011 MONTHLY FOCUS FILE:

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PROJECT SIERRA

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To learn all about this amazing project in Sierra Leone, please visit the [project page](#) or read their most recent quarterly report [here](#). SI's Project Liaison, Alison Sutherland, has written a wonderful report for the 2007-2011 Quadrennial Report. [Click here to read it!](#)

The June edition of TIS is dedicated to celebrating all of the work that has been done for and under this project - all around the world. [Click here to read more!](#)

What programmes are running as part of Proect Sierra?

Young Mother Support (Bo)

The project works with 104 young mothers and 58 babies, targeting vulnerable, single young mothers who are living alone. It helps to prevent them from being separated from their babies by supporting them to learn essential parenting skills. It also aims to reintegrate them with their families and empower them to be independent, active members of their community. There are approximately 140 members of the wider community who benefit from the project by attending workshops run by the team.

Young Mothers and Children Living Alone in Freetown (Kissy)

Working with 70 children, 37 parents/caregivers and 409 extended family members, the project targets vulnerable children and young mothers who are living alone on the streets of Freetown. The aim is to reunite the children with their families or extended families and support them to live together. With the young mothers the aim is to prevent them being separated from their babies and empower them to be independent, active members of the community, as well as to reconcile them with their families.

The New Community Hubs (Bo, Kissy, Kamakwie, Mattru)

This quarter, HANCI-SL has begun to increase the impact of the ACTIVE Family Support model by replacing it with Community Hubs. These hubs are aimed at supporting significantly more vulnerable children and their families, with facilities to benefit the entire community. Services have been developed to strengthen vulnerable families and children, and to extend support to single mothers with teenage daughters. Depending on the needs of the community, the services provided will include: counselling and mentoring, basic health care and vaccinations, day care, life-skills training and income-generation workshops. This approach is based on the model successfully implemented in our projects in Rwanda and South Africa, empowering local people to care for the most vulnerable children themselves for years to come.

Want to learn more about Sierra Leone?

Read the BBC Country Profile [here](#).

[The CIA World Fact Book](#) page on Sierra Leone also contains a lot of useful information.

Hosting a film night can be a great way of raising awareness. Borrow or buy a copy of 'Pride of Lions' - a feature documentary film dedicated to the people of Sierra Leone. [Click here](#) for more information.

"Pride of Lions" presents Sierra Leone in a new light - the story of what it means for a country and its people brutalized by an 11-year civil war to move beyond their scars. Through personal stories of human suffering, loss, and recovery, woven within a 50-year historical framework, the Sierra Leoneans reveal universal truths about the strength of the human spirit and the power of forgiveness to move us forward. The amputee, boy soldier, doctor, high school principal, student, and agricultural entrepreneur - each has a unique perspective and a powerful story to tell.

[ADVOCACY](#)

UN SCR 1325

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is the most important document relating to women and conflict. It is important to be aware of this resolution if you are advocating issues relating to women and conflict, especially the role of women in conflict resolution. The resolution can be found [here](#).

United Nations Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 was established to address the impact of war on women, and increase women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

The adoption of Resolution 1325 marked the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women, recognized the under-valued and under-utilised contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security.

The UN Security Council has so far adopted four additional resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. In addition to **SCR 1325 (2000)**, these resolutions are: **Security Council Resolutions [1820 \(2008\)](#); [1888 \(2009\)](#); [1889 \(2009\)](#) and [1960 \(2010\)](#)**. The five resolutions should be taken together as they comprise the Women, Peace and Security thematic agenda of the Security Council, and the international security policy framework. The obligations in the resolutions extends from the international to the local level, as well as from intergovernmental bodies, such as the United Nations, to national level governments.

The Security Council is obliged to implement all of its resolutions on women, peace and security – Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960.

The Security Council's agenda is comprised of both geographic situations and thematic issues. Women, Peace and Security is one of these larger thematic agenda items of which the Security Council holds annual Open Debates, ad-hoc briefings, and also adopts resolutions and presidential statements. These debates continue to impact on Sierra Leone as a country recovering from conflict, and many other countries around the world where conflict is on-going.

Read the latest update from SI's UN Representatives in New York: [CEDAW Recommendation on the Protection of Women in Conflict Areas](#).

Peace Women:

www.peacewomen.org is an excellent source of information.

For the 10th anniversary of 1325, Peacewomen launched the '[Women, Peace and Security Handbook](#)', which examines the degree to which the Security Council has internalised the thematic agenda of Women, peace and security in its geographic work over the past 10 years, specifically in the Council's country-specific resolutions.

Divided into thirteen thematic chapters, the handbook is a reference guide for both progress made and action to be taken on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The analysis assesses the consistency with which Council resolutions reflect the language and intent of SCR 1325. Good practice extracts from resolutions are presented and critical recommendations are made. This is an excellent resource for further advocacy and awareness!

ACTION

We are so close to reaching the target of £1,000,000! We encourage you to hold one final fundraising event in July and August. Raise awareness, raise money and change lives...

Visit the [Project Sierra resources page](#) for lots of ideas.

Why not hold a fundraising evening where you share a number of case studies with your guests, show a film (see the awareness section for details of 'Pride of Lions', a film about Sierra Leone), or cook a Sierra Leonean meal? [Click here](#) for some recipe ideas. Remember to share the most recent [film](#) from Project Sierra, made in June 2011.

Case Studies:

Hannah

Hannah is from the rural location of Mattru and was enrolled in the project in 2007 at the age of 15. Following the death of her parents, Hannah was fostered by her blind uncle and, as the oldest, she became the breadwinner, selling firewood to feed the family of six. The family was referred to the ICFS project by the local management committee, which is a collective of representatives from the community, local and chiefdom authorities.

Considering her age at the time of enrolment, Hannah opted for training in tailoring and in August 2007 she was admitted as a trainee at the SLOIC Training Centre in Tihun in the Sogbini Chiefdom. During her training, Hannah continued to help support her family by selling firewood and charcoal within her community. In June 2009, Hannah completed her training in tailoring. After her graduation she was provided with a standing sewing machine, two rolls of poplin materials, some assorted sewing threads and other tailoring equipment such as scissors and a tape measure. The tools were formally handed over at a ceremony attended by community elders, project staff and friends and family of those who were graduating.

Returning to her village, Hannah set up her tailoring business from of the family home. During her first month of business, Hannah had 15 commissions. She has plans to grow her business and she has decided she will continue to sell firewood and charcoal to supplement her family's income. She says her biggest plan is to save enough money to enable her uncle to have treatment at the hospital in the coming year.

Mardea's Story

Mardea is from Bo. She grew up in a very happy family with her parents and four younger siblings. Sadly, after the death of her father, Mardea's family situation deteriorated. Mardea's mother remarried and unfortunately Mardea's relationship with her stepfather and his children was extremely tense. Over time the situation got worse and her stepfather eventually asked her to leave the family home. With no one else to turn to, Mardea found herself living and working on the streets as a sex worker.

During this time she discovered that she was pregnant. Throughout the early months of her pregnancy Mardea was very sick; she became withdrawn and elder members of the community became very worried about her situation. Several of them visited her mother and stepfather to alert them to Mardea's plight and they agreed that she would be able to return home. After the birth of

her daughter Mardea returned to working on the streets in order to provide for herself and her child.

Worried for both Mardea and her baby, senior members of the community reported this situation to the Community Chief who referred Mardea's case to the HANCI-SL team in Bo. Mardea was registered on the Young Mothers Programme where she chose to train in gara-tie and dyeing. In addition to this training, she also received counselling, healthcare and clothing and food for herself and her baby.

Mardea spent 18 months on the programme and when she graduated she received a start-up kit to enable her to begin her own small business enterprise. Before her graduation, HANCI-SL Social workers facilitated family mediation sessions between Mardea and her parents. Her parents also attended training sessions and workshops which focussed on the relationships between parents and their children. The social worker also made follow up meetings to offer Mardea's parents individual counselling.

As a result of this intervention the situation between Mardea and her family greatly improved. Despite this, Mardea felt that it was time to become independent and asked her parents to allow her to rent a property with a young woman who she had met whilst on the Young Mothers Programme. With the permission of their parents, Mardea and her friend now live in a one-room property with their young children. They are also working together to produce gara and batik pieces which they sell in their local community and to other organisations.

"As you can see, we live in this tiny room but we are very happy here. We are doing well in our business and we are capable of taking care of our problems without depending on anyone. Our community thinks highly of us. Many consider us as role models in our community. The community respects us because we are committed to our business. Even though we do not have husbands now, no man can play the fool with us any longer because we are capable of earning our own livelihoods. In addition, we can send our children to school and at the same time assist our parents in whatever little way we can. Our lives have permanently changed for the better.

Please do share this letter of thanks from the Executive Director of Hope and Homes for Children with your club, and any other groups you have worked with to raise money for Project Sierra.

[Click to Download: Letter of thanks](#)

[USEFUL LINKS](#)

Project Sierra Information:

[Project Sierra Website](#)

[SI Project pages on Project Sierra](#)

[CIA World Fact Book](#)

[BBC Country Profile of Sierra Leone](#)

Information on Women and Conflict

[Channel 16](#) is a frontline for responding to humanitarian emergencies and conflicts.

[The PeaceWomen Project](#) promotes the role of women in preventing conflict, and the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security. PeaceWomen monitors the UN [Security Council](#).

Follow this link for the 'Women, Peace and Security' handbook:

http://www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/handbook

[Security Council Resolution 1325](#)