

# *SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter*

*January – March 2015*

*Edition XIII*



Greetings, and thank you for your interest, participation and support of our project in Africa.

## *SSAAP on the News:*

On December 22, 2014, Simwatachela Sustainable Agricultural and Arts Program [SSAAP] was given a wonderful opportunity to share with interested viewers on Denver's Channel 9 News the Ebola situation in Sierra Leone, West Africa.



Although the news clips were short (approximately three minutes each), SSAAP's Executive Director Heather Cumming was quite pleased to have the occasion to talk about the Ebola virus, and how the people in Sierra Leone were reacting to this outbreak in their daily lives through the lens of having had lived in the country during the time the virus began to spread. The local people's reactions to the outbreak, how they interpreted its meaning in their lives and the way that, as a culture, the people would prepare for, combat and act in response to the widespread illness Heather tried to touch upon, although the three minutes per news show made it quite difficult to explain fully or in depth the situation there.

Please feel free to watch the shows as per the links provided, below.

The programs are different; the 11 a.m. show has more footage of Sierra Leone and the medical equipment/personnel there, and the noon show is mostly just of Heather and the news anchor seated in the newsroom. The discussions in both shows vary, so it might be worth your while to watch both in order to get more of a panoramic view of the dire situation, presently, in Sierra Leone.

The photographs in both shows Heather took in Sierra Leone in 2009; the 11 a.m. show is a photo of her daughter Radiance's cousins in Freetown, Sierra Leone and the background of Radiance's father's house. The picture is interesting because his father (Radiance's grandfather) worked for the UN, her father painted for the UN exhibitions and still the family was living in an intense poverty situation, as seen in the photo. The second photo is of a group of women in Kroobay Slums, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

First news show link:

<http://www.9news.com/videos/news/health/2014/12/23/20822365/>

Second news show link:

<http://www.9news.com/media/cinematic/video/20838947/travelers-having-less-anxiety-over-ebola/>



## *SSAAP's Work with Partners:*

SSAAP, as a grassroots organization serving in both Zambia and Sierra Leone, attempts to work as frequently and as in-depth as possible with both local organizations as well as international organizations to implement its goals, mission and projects.

### *Engineers Without Borders, Mississippi State University:*

Mississippi State University's student chapter of Engineers Without Borders has contracted to work five years alongside SSAAP, funding water wells and assisting to investigate communities in need of water in rural areas of Simwatachela, as well as to provide sustainable water solutions in areas where present water exists. The engineers began their work with SSAAP in July 2013, and continue to visit Simwatachela annually, from the end of July to mid-August. The engineer students enjoy seeing the actual process of well sites being assessed, learning how groundwater contaminants enter into a community's water source, and then working alongside a 'borehole committee' created by the communities in preparation to receive a borehole well, as well in cultivating relationships with the local people of Simwatachela.

Please learn more about Engineers Without Borders and their work in Simwatachela, as well as their cultural experience in the village in July/August 2014 by reading the link below:

<http://www.alumnus.msstate.edu/Winter14/deepwater.html>

The engineers will meet Heather Cumming and her daughter, Radiance, in the village mid-July 2015 to complete three more wells and assess new areas to drill wells. The engineer student group works together with their engineering professor, Dr. Dennis Truax, P.E., DEE, F.ASCE, James T. White Chair, Department Head and Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Mississippi State University. Dr. Truax was named Cambridge Publishing's "Professional of the Year in Higher Education" in 2009. Quite fortunately for Ms. Cumming, Dr. Truax not only has a wonderful way of presenting high-level engineering concepts at a first-grade level for her personal understanding, he also has a phenomenal sense of humor - quite useful for working in Africa. A little bit of humor can go a long way in the African bush.

The engineer team is also run by Bill Mitchell, PE, PLS and Vice-President/Principal of Brown, Mitchell & Alexander, Inc., a highly-reputable Consulting Engineer Firm in both Gulfport and Biloxi, Mississippi. He continues to work together with the Engineers Without Borders on their Simwatachela Mission and has dedicated a great amount of his time, energy, and personal resources into this project. The project would not be where it is today without both Mr. Mitchell and Dr. Truax, so hats off to you and thank you both!



Engineering students sit with Chief Simwatachela, discussing the project and explaining the need for borehole wells in his chiefdom.

*DU's Josef Korbel School of International Studies: African Initiatives and Students for Africa:*

SSAAP deems itself fortunate to work together with DU's African Initiatives and Students for Africa, two student groups under the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, headed by Director and Professor Peter Van Arsdale. Every year, Students for Africa ('SfA') and African Initiatives ('AI') hosts a fundraiser for SSAAP, to give both the Josef Korbel School as well as DU students in other disciplines an opportunity to have its students engage in Africa-centric projects.

<http://www.du.edu/korbel/africaninitiatives/partners/entrepreneurship.html>

Please join us for SSAAP's annual fundraiser, held on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> from 5-8:30 p.m, hosted by DU's Josef Korbel School of International Studies: African Initiatives student chapter as well as Students for Africa with DU. Drop by for food, browsing at photos from Zambia and Sierra Leone, talking about Africa and listening to brief presentations about the projects as well as listening to live African music: drums, gong, timbales, congas, native flute, piano and djembe.

African art from both Zambia and Sierra Leone will be for sale and donations to SSAAP are welcome; we ask for a suggested \$10 donation at the door.

Please see the attached flier as well to this email for further details.





### *U.S. Africa Network [USAN] Exhibition:*

SSAAP is currently working alongside US Africa Network, an organization working to create an online exhibition, for the purpose of highlighting groups focusing on Africa and with determination to combat the Ebola outbreak. USAN is interested in getting the story of artists in affected areas of West Africa (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) who can provide an insightful view into their communities through any medium (visual, music, poetry, craft etc) and is welcome to display their work.

More news on this exhibition, as well as the link to the online exhibition, is to come in the future.



### *Methodology, Framework, and Philosophy of SSAAP:*

SSAAP works in rural communities, and lives among the very people that benefit from its projects. Ideally, the project enjoys working with local groups that are already organized in the area, such as farmers associations, women's groups, and agriculture associations.

Prominently, SSAAP stresses, enforces and believes in education as the ultimate tool of empowerment, organizing sustainable models for the people within the rural areas so that they may not rely on outside sources for their needs. As well, SSAAP works with the people directly benefiting from its projects, i.e. direct beneficiaries.

SSAAP also believes in a community approach; however, not in the traditional sense that only the communities in Africa are benefiting from its efforts. Instead, the 'community' at-heart is a global one, inclusive of American communities as well.

It is fundamentally imperative that the people participating in SSAAP-U.S.A. are benefiting as much as those participating in SSAAP-Africa, perhaps in different but equally-important ways.

SSAAP locates rural village communities in need of: clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene solutions, education for primary-aged children and secondary school girls to re-enter school after pregnancy (Sierra

Leone only), animal-rearing projects (goats, chickens, pigs, etc.), and income-generation projects the people can take pride and ownership of.

Eventually, SSAAP would like to work more-extensively with cattle-rearing in Simwatachela, Zambia, and with IVS (*Inland Valley Swamp*) farming in Sierra Leone: the practice of growing rice in swamplands.



Heather's daughter, Radiance (called '*Mumuni wa Leza*' in her village in Zambia and called '*Amara*' in Sierra Leone) snuggles with her newborn kitten in her bed in Simwatachela, Zambia.

### *Heather's Philosophy on Organic, Sustainable, Nurturing, Effective and Heart-Centered Philanthropy Relative to Africa:*

In a nutshell, here is our project model:

SSAAP works, happily and successfully, in rural areas in Sierra Leone and Zambia, using a model called '*grassroots development*'. We [my daughter Radiance and I] live with the communities we work with and therefore identifying people to execute the missions of the project is quite easy as there are many people in need of these services. As well, the programs were created by the people, and thus the project is committed to serving these very people. As this is the people's project - not mine, they decide what issues in their lives need addressed, come to SSAAP for help, we work together to find simple solutions and I am committed to this and to them! SSAAP does not have employees, nor does it hire outside help (i.e. people from Western countries, or host country nationals living in the towns or cities), with the exception of professional well-diggers and well-drillers in both Sierra Leone and Zambia.

The developmental model that SSAAP uses is parallel to the U.S. Peace Corps, which is the largest grassroots organization in America and has been quite a success since the 1960s. The U.S. Peace Corps is also a volunteer organization just as SSAAP is; anyone working with it is looking to help those who are without basic resources, rather than working together for the sake of procuring for oneself.

SSAAP has used this project model, backed by many who believe in it as well, since 2008 and thus the people supporting SSAAP have the same mindset, generally preferring their donations go directly to projects – not to people's salaries, expensive vehicles, laptops for people in villages without electricity, etc.



SSAAP works with fundamental life and survival resources instead, successfully drilling water wells, sponsoring children to go to school, and animal-rearing. We have found that our project model works marvelously simply because I am willing to implement the projects for SSAAP, and require no monetary currency in doing so. Rather, I am paid in the best kind of currency there is: life-experience, living a simple life in a village, and passionately loving my work. I am committed to doing whatever is in my power to work with the people of rural Africa. I love them intensely, and understand their perspective.

The project functions on a phenomenally low budget. As well, the money that the project is saving by not paying salaries to anyone is being used directly on the project itself, rather than paying for overhead, or administrative expenses. Such is the heartbreaking disaster I have seen countless times in Africa which ends up causing many overseas charities to shut down: most of the money for projects marked to help the rural poor is squandered and the people in the Western countries see no result from the money they have donated.

The NGO, or *Non-Governmental Organization* model that is commonly used in Africa differs from the grassroots/Peace Corps/organic approach that SSAAP favors in that the NGO model benefits those at the top but commonly falls short at the grassroots/village/rural level simply because it oftentimes neglects to represent and teach the sustainability necessary for the project to survive long after the organization funding the program has left. The Peace Corps model is designed to favor and teach people living at the grassroots level how to be sustainable in a plethora of educational hands-on ways, so that the organization can eventually leave the area, not leaving the people there dependent upon it, and move into other communities in-need of services.

In short, the NGO's presence is more of a 'trickle down' one whereby the resources start at the high levels, usually in the capital cities of countries, and randomly and unsystematically may or may not 'trickle down' to the people at the bottom (the uneducated, monetarily-poor, disadvantaged) living in the villages who need it the most. Conversely, the grassroots model has no 'trickle-down' effect, simply because it starts at the bottom, so there is nowhere for it to 'trickle down'.

## *How You Can Help:*



SSAAP does not participate in women-only programs in Africa, embracing the belief that the men need help too. Such is a well-preserved fact many of us are unaware of: in the developing world, the 'domestic' chores such as cooking, cleaning, washing, sewing the men can do and are many times better than the women at doing, just as the women can farm/plow fields/do 'manly' jobs and are often better than the men at doing them!

SSAAP is interested in recruiting volunteers either remaining State-side or those who would want to travel to come overseas, joining in SSAAP's empowerment initiative. The two SSAAP-Africa countries differ significantly, yet both are arenas where many projects, pure intentions and new ideas can go a long way: Zambia (SSAAP has its house/base there, has been there 11+ years, is very safe and Ms. Cumming and her daughter speak the local language) or Sierra Leone (in the Ebola epidemic it has lost considerably; the people in Sierra Leone are deeply in-need of help/services/venues to learn a trade to have a place in the workforce, which is at 90% unemployment right now!). Sierra Leone is the third-poorest country in the world as of 2014. Due to a gruesome civil war in 1990-2001, as well as the current Ebola situation, Sierra Leone is not the safest place to work on the planet, but it is one of the most spirited and adventurous. Sierra Leoneans are some of the most intelligent, interesting, beautiful and hard-working people I have had the pleasure of working with.

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**Dear Buyer,**

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Please see <http://smile.amazon.com/about> for program details.

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- Sign up for 0.5% of your total purchase cost to go to SSAAP, Tax ID number 27-2033029, or enter in 'Simwatachela Sustainable' and the computer will automatically recognize our nonprofit organization. After you purchase products on smile.amazon.com, amazon donates to SSAAP. The buyer does not pay any extra for his/her purchase by choosing to donate to a cause through AmazonSmile.



Children walking to school in Zambia just after the sun rises, around 6:15 a.m.

## *Ebola Update:*

Around Christmastime of 2014, the Ebola virus in Sierra Leone hit an all-time high, but is at this time thankfully on the decline. One of Ms. Cumming's best friends, Andrew Conteh [Ph. D, Retail Sales Executive for NP(SL), Ltd., (*National Petroleum, Sierra Leone*) and Founder of the Lucy Foundation and member of the Pakistan Institute of Human Rights in Lahore, Pakistan] sends Ms. Cumming daily text message updates as quotes from Awoko, the national newspaper in Sierra Leone. The following are a few of his messages:

01/12/2015: 11 Jan. 21 dead 28 new cases. Week of 29 Nov. to 4 Dec. 246 new cases, 158 dead. Week of 5-11 Dec. 205 (less 41) new cases, 106 dead (less 52). MSF [*Doctors Without Borders*] opens Ebola centre for pregnant women at Wellington (Awoko).

01/13/2015: 12 Jan. 13 dead 20 new cases. W. Area 12 or 45% of country cases. 141 more survivors from 0-11 Jan (259) than 0-11 Dec (118)(Awoko).

01/13/2015: 13 Jan. 5 dead 19 new cases. W. Area 8 Port Loko zero. 9 districts record zero cases.

01/14/2015: 14 Jan. 16 dead 23 new cases. Kenema breaks 9 days run with 1 new case as Red Cross (IFRC) nurse who died 13 Jan. Phase 1 of W. Area Surge recorded 944 sick people of which 263 were positive (Awoko).

01/20/2015: 19 Jan 13 dead 20 new cases. W. Area 7 Port Loko 10. Guinea Prime Minister launches 60 day target for zero new cases (Awoko). Cuban Nurse Reinaldo Antigua (43) sent to fight Ebola in SL dies of Malaria. 488 medics have died of Ebola in West Africa with SL recording the highest (221 deaths) out of 296 infected – WHO (Awoko).

01/28/2015: 27 Jan. 8 dead 9 new cases. W. Area 2, W. Area Rural 0. Bonthe goes 38 clear days with no new case. Over 180,000 people have lost their jobs in SL – w. Bank. Ebola effects costs Air Namibia (Awoko).

02/02/2015: Deaths dropped by 463 from 913 (Dec) to 450 (Jan). 32% of private sector workers have either been sacked or sent on compulsory leave with or without pay. UK's total support for Ebola now Le 2 trillion (Awoko).

02/03: 2 Feb. 2 deaths 17 new cases. Port Loko 12, W. Area 4. Chinese Embassy hands over 5,000 thermometers as Education Min. Plans for 6 thermometers per school. 2<sup>nd</sup> UK soja flown back (Sat and Mon) after needle prick (Awoko).

02/09/2015: 9 Feb. 7 dead 13 new cases. W. Area Urban 6 Port Loko 7. SL has lost close to \$100m in revenue since Ebola. UK's CDC will share 50% risk of \$50m short-term loans to SL businesses with Standard Chartered bank (Awoko).



Bush fruit in Zambia. In ciTonga, it is called 'gwii'; separated by large seeds covered in a sweet syrup, it is a favorite for many.

**Monthly Performance Review from SSAAP Partner in Sierra Leone:  
Grace Children's Foundation:**

This report was submitted to me a few months ago, which serves as a magnificent testament of the work being completed on the poultry project in Makoba Village, Port Loko, Sierra Leone, even in my absence. The sustainability factor of the project is primary if the project is to be a success:

\*

**Grace Children's Foundation Sierra Leone**  
**Port Loko**  
**Seeking Help for Children**  
**1 Off Cemetry Road, RolaL, Port Loko**  
**Email: gracechildren@yahoo.com**  
**Website www.blogspot.gmail**  
**Cell No: +232-078-509-764/+232-088-704-789/+232-076-113-171**



***Monthly Performance Report***

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup>/08/2014**

**Name of Project:**.... Poultry Farm **Month:**..... August  
**Name of village:**.....Makoba **Chiefdom:**.....BKM  
**District:**.....Port Loko.  
**Name of GCF Officer:**.....Taylor S. Kamara  
**Designation:** .....National Coordinator  
**Name of Vet Officer:** .....Francis Kobba  
**Number of Farmers:** .....Ten (10)  
**Number of birds vaccinated:** ...Fifty (50)

Male:10 Female:40. Age:-----.

**Types of vaccines/Drugs administered:**..... New Castle vaccine, vitamins, antibiotics and dewormers

**Decisions taken and implemented:**.....Individual farmers takes care of their birds, strong roofing material provided, constant report to GCF.

**Monthly Activities:**.....clearing of poultry farm, fencing, proving rice bran in poultry rooms

**Challenges:**.....Building would got congested, security of birds low, farmers lack of education about poultry.

**Results/Conclusion:**.....birds are doing well, farmers are cooperating.

**Recommendations:**.....lantern lamps to be provided, vaccines and drugs to be given regularly

Feeding and water troughs be provided also.

**Signed:** .....T.S. Kamara **Date:**.....6<sup>th</sup>/08/2014.

**National Co-ordinator**

**(G.C.F)**

Signed: F. Kobba, **Vet Officer**

Date:6<sup>th</sup>/08/2014.

**GRACE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION SIERRA LEONE, West Africa**

**1 Off Cemetery Road, Rolal, Port Loko**

Email: gracechildren@yahoo.com

CELL NO: +232-078-509-764/+232-088-704-789/+232-076-113-171

**Poultry Vaccination Form (Makoba) Date: 6<sup>th</sup>/08/2014.**



No.	Name Of Farmer	No. Of Fowls	M	F	Vaccines	Antibiotics	Vitamins	Dewormers
	N. Bangura Kamara	5	1	4	0.5 m/fowl	2mg/bird	2mg/bird	2mg/bird
	Isata Kamara	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Kadiatu Bangura	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Adama Sellah Kamara	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Abibatu Kamara	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Yabonghok Kamara	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ya. Marie Kamara	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ya. Amie	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

	Kamara							
	Ya. Abibatu Kamara	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Fatu Balay	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Signed :T.S. Kamara, GCF

Date:6<sup>th</sup>/08/2014

Signed: F. Kobba, Vet Officer

Date:6<sup>th</sup>/08/2014.



Thank you for your time, interest, and support of SSAAP-Africa!