



THE WATERLOO PARTNERSHIP

Newsletter
2009-2010

REG. CHARITY NO: 1111926

www.waterloopartnership.co.uk

'Two Waterloos, One Hope'

GREETINGS FROM WATERLOO PARTNERSHIP UK

The Waterloo Partnership was founded in September 2005, following the tragic civil war in Sierra Leone, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. The charity aims to promote the building up of community in Waterloo, Merseyside and Waterloo, Sierra Leone. Major aspects of our work involve safeguarding the dignity of persons, supporting those struggling to achieve

basic human rights and raising funds to supply resources needed urgently for education, health and farming. We endeavour to establish links between specific institutions in Waterloo, Merseyside and neighbouring areas, and our appropriate partners in Waterloo, Sierra Leone. Among our key objectives are harnessing skills and efforts contributed by voluntary project workers in both communities, and communicating the findings of visits to and from Sierra Leone.

In keeping with the charity's aims and

aspirations, all members of WPUK are volunteers and there is no paid staff. It has always been a deeply held conviction of WPUK that the monies received from donors must reach the members of the Waterloo community in Sierra Leone. Enormous gratitude for these donations is reflected in the diligent keeping of financial records and the judicious management of projects.

Currently, there are 20 volunteers who meet regularly to promote and manage the charity's work.

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The Williams Street Bridge

The old bridge as it was ...



The Williams Street Bridge connects the town of Waterloo to the Christian cemetery. In a country where the average age of death is 34, the cemetery necessarily plays a prominent role in the

community. We saw the bridge in February and it was not fit for purpose, especially in the rainy season. Another souvenir of the civil war, it simply could not be used. The community asked for funds to re-construct



... and the new bridge nearing completion

the bridge. An engineer from Sierra Leone donated his services and supervised the project; WPUK funds were used to buy the materials, and local people rebuilt the bridge in their spare time and did not ask for pay.

Hence by May the bridge had been restored. The impact has been amazing and the community is extremely grateful. Several other bridges, that also need repairing, feature strongly in our future plans.

CREDIT

Feeding Bodies and Minds

Agricultural Projects

In Waterloo SL, seeds and tools are in great demand, particularly by the very poorest of the poor, and are provided through our Christmas gift scheme.

A young widow - aged 24 - is one of the beneficiaries. The scheme enables her to support her four children, as well as her mother-in-law, on the Benni swamp.

A great story of determination comes from two brothers, also beneficiaries. They want to go to school and, because their widowed mother is too poor to pay for their education, they fund it themselves!

Each morning they tend their plot and then, after a full day in the classroom, they return to the swamp to harvest some of their produce before walking to the market to sell it.



From weeding to reading! These boys work to fund their schooling

Raising Dough for Bakers

This year our activities in Sierra Leone will build on the success of existing projects. We will be 'raising dough for bakers' - seeking funds to provide training, premises and equipment for two new women's bakery co-operatives. Cassava bread and banana bread are both produced locally in Waterloo. However, output is pitifully limited and nowhere near meets demand.

Building Bridges

One of our priorities is to help re-construct the Songo Road bridge. The WPSL chairman, Alieu Mansaray, has told us that it is 'very close to collapse, threatening a total cut-off between Waterloo and schools in Coletown and Lumpa'.

In the two Waterloos,

please help us to go on 'raising dough' and 'building bridges'!

The Education Scheme

Currently our charity enables 40 vulnerable children in Waterloo to go to school: we provide uniforms, educational



Veronica Jalloh, a local community worker, and the current bakery.

resources, school fees, and a small sum for maintenance.

Irene Conteh, who helped to identify those in need, writes: 'The well dressed children in their new uniforms.... looked smart and happy. Their guardians beamed with pride and pleasure... The school education for almost all of these children would have come to an end three years ago had it not been for the financial support given them by the Waterloo Partnership. Other vulnerable children, who are not beneficiaries, still roam the streets aimlessly.' The project leader, Aminata Mansaray, told us: 'The effort we are making now towards these children comes not from our strength or ability, but from the power of true love and friendship from our donors in the UK.'

Please continue to support these children: the gift of education is for life!

'A new bakery would provide bread at an affordable price for the community, particularly for our children'

Hellen Whenzle,
Chair of Progressive Women's Organisation

Curriculum, Containers, and Corrugated Iron!

School Links

What a year it has been for school links between the two Waterloos! Several schools, including English Martyrs and Ursuline, will now join other linked schools, All Saints, Great Crosby and Maricourt on the planned February visit to schools in Sierra Leone. Funded by the British Council, these visits stimulate children's learning, bring the curriculum to life, and extend the hand of friendship across the continents.

Recently, several teachers have asked for their retirement collections to be donated for community projects near their link schools. These include a well, a bakery, and more; generous gifts indeed, and what a way to be remembered!

Last June All Saints' Primary School, Bootle, was re-locating, leaving much surplus equipment behind. Understanding the great need in Waterloo SL, the pupils collected and packed these goods for a container, and planned the shipment with help from the Waterloo Partnership. However, there was no time to raise the money for shipping. In an unprecedented example of collaboration, pupils at the neighbouring English Martyrs' Primary School came to the rescue and raised the cash. Children learnt lots from this teamwork, which benefited many schools in Waterloo SL.



Before the new building, Kulafai was an 'open air' school!

'Dear God, help us to unite with our partners...to strengthen our love for each other and all that we do. Amen'

A prayer by Suliman Conteh, a pupil at St. Raphael's School, Waterloo SL

Many thanks to everyone who helped, especially local transport and shipping firms.

Building Kulafai School

During our visit to Waterloo SL in February 2009 we were asked to visit Kulafai School, where 15 teachers and 514 pupils were crammed into a building the size of a house. One class had to be taught under a tree; in the rainy season the children squeezed indoors. The corrugated iron roof had collapsed into one of the classrooms. There were no doors and the floors were mere dust. Most children had no benches, leaning on their knees to write.

Fortunately, the school

owned a suitable site about 1km away, so a new building was proposed as a very high priority. WPUK received a donation of £2500 from eight London bankers, who decided that their 'coffee money' could be put to better use: this contribution was matched by their bank. With a further generous gift from Sacred Heart College, the project went ahead. It took only about two months to complete three classrooms, which had to be finished before the rains: the bricks were made by local people.

Education is highly valued by the people of Waterloo SL. It was wonderful to see a photograph of the nearly completed building and to know that our community has helped them to help themselves.

Cementing Friendships



Left: The Welding Shed



Right: Abu Bakarr Kamara with some of the equipment supplied by WPUK

THE PHDA

During the 2008 visit the Progressive Handicapped Development Association decided, with us, to build a wall around their welding site for reasons of health and safety. WPUK donated the funds.

During our visit in February 2009 we were delighted to see that they had built not just a wall, but a welding shed so that the men can work all year - even when the rains come. They have now started to sell metal doors, window frames and agricultural tools to their community.

“We have been able to achieve all this due to funds provided by WPUK and the unflinching support of chairman Badara of WPSL. We are grateful to WPUK and all those who have contributed the funds,” says Abu Bakarr Kamara, a representative from PHDA.

Building a library and resource centre

A library and resource centre in Waterloo, Sierra Leone, remains a major hope for both communities. However, it became clear that if it were to succeed, those with the necessary expertise should take over the building programme. In April 2008, after consulting the Charity Commission, funds set aside for constructing the

library were transferred to the Construction and Development Partnership (CODEP) - a new charity set up to build libraries in Africa, starting in Waterloo SL. If all goes well, the Centre will be completed by the end of 2011. CODEP and WPUK are endeavouring to work together to make this dream a reality.

Finding out more
Contact the Hon. Secretary,
 150 Brownmoor Lane, Crosby, L23 9SQ
 Tel 0151 932 1682.
 daleyvonne@hotmail.com
www.waterloopartnership.co.uk

How can you help?



'Small events' fundraising. A group planning the coming year's small events would welcome some more volunteers.

'Gifts in Kind'. Specific items for SL are occasionally required: currently we need single bedding and sewing machines. **Contact** Linda on 0151 924 2813

Donations ... The Waterloo Partnership is a registered UK charity, and a member of the Fundraising Standards Board. Donations are always welcome and

should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, 20 Enfield Ave., Crosby L23 0SZ (cheques payable to 'The Waterloo Partnership'). Please include contact details. We will let you know how

your gifts have made a difference. Birthday, anniversary, or special occasion? - instead of having presents, why not encourage donations to the Waterloo Partnership?