

Sierra Leone Community Based Health Care Programme Q1 2010 Report

**Prepared for
Soroptimist International Wales South Health Education &
Hygiene Trust**



Executive Summary

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has been able to undertake a fantastic amount of work, thanks to the funding from Soroptimist International Wales South Health Education & Hygiene Trust (SIWSHEHT) both last year and in February 2010. Receiving funds at the start of the year is incredibly valuable as this is when the majority of our work is scheduled, in Q1 and Q2 before the rainy season. The rains make roads difficult to travel on, and hamper the Red Cross' ability to reach communities and help people. As a result budgeting is weighted heavily in the first part of the year.

Highlights

Much of the activity in Q1 and Q2 underpins SIWSHEHT's 'Licking Lassa Fever' campaign, including the construction of latrines, provision of clean water, ongoing hygiene promotion, and training of volunteers in Lassa Fever prevention and control.

Here are just a few examples of what has been achieved this quarter:

- Construction of 32 latrines is under way.
- 39 trainer volunteers in 13 villages received training on good hygiene and health practices.
- 7,000 people were reached in an awareness-raising campaign on the prevention and control of Lassa Fever, Malaria and TB.
- 341 children under 5 years were referred to the nearest health facilities for growth monitoring.

Other news

On 27th April 2010, Sierra Leone independence day, the Government of Sierra Leone launched free health care services for children under five, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. This is to tackle the devastating mortality and morbidity rates among children and pregnant women. Most of SLRCS's clinics will be used as Peripheral Health Units and will be supported by the Government.

Achievements this quarter

Safer birthing

Tragically, Sierra Leone has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. The government is addressing this by trialing Birth Waiting Homes, which give women a safe place to stay before and after giving birth. They are currently being trialed in Koinadugu branch.

To further promote safe and clean deliveries, SLRCS delivered hygiene materials to the District Health Management Team in Koinadugu branch. This included items such as dettol, toilet soap, rubber bowls, scrubbing brushes and blankets.

A better life for mother and child



Mothers' club members doing a house-to-house visit

Immunisation saves lives

During the quarter, 542 children under 5 years of age were traced and referred for immunisation. 485 of these children were routinely immunised against Polio and 57 were given measles vaccinations. 520 Red Cross volunteers in 13 branches visited a total of 850 households.

In February, 520 Red Cross Volunteers in 13 branches participated in a four-day nationwide Immunisation Campaign against Polio for children under 5 years.

The campaign was spearheaded by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and saw the vaccination of over 900,000 under fives against the crippling disease. Volunteers were engaged in social mobilization through house to house visits, and also helping with the marking of houses visited and inking the thumbs of immunised children.

Monitoring growth

In all branches, Mothers' club members and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) weighed 112 children under 5 years to monitor their growth.

341 children under 5 years in 5 branches were referred to the nearest health facilities for growth monitoring.



Growth monitoring in progress



Constructing latrines

Construction of nine two-sitter Ventilated Improved Pit toilets is underway in Port Loko, Kenema and Kailahun branches. Three toilets in Mapatheh in Port Loko have been completed, three in Kenema branch and three in Ngiema Kailahun branch are under construction. Twenty three latrines are being constructed in Tonkolili branch.

Training of Trainers on good hygiene and health practices for 39 volunteers has been completed in 13 villages in Tonkolili branch.

Spreading the word

SLRCS have produced 13,000 assorted materials covering a number of topics, including: breast feeding, immunisation, family planning, HIV and AIDS, correct preparation of Oral Rehydration Salts, effective use of insecticidal nets, and environmental sanitation. They have been distributed to all branches and communities.

HIV and AIDS prevention and support

On the 15th February 2010, rice, beans, oil and vitamin supplements were given to 60 people living with HIV and AIDS. (40 in Bo and 20 in Moyamba branches). Not only were they given food, but also education on nutrition.

During the quarter, 26 schools (10,557 pupils) across all branches benefited from drama performances conducted by 280 Youth Peer Educators to raise awareness on HIV and AIDS.

Health Promotional talks on HIV and AIDS prevention control, care and mitigation were carried out by 280 Youth Peer Educators in 41 communities across all branches reaching 500 young people.



In February home visits were undertaken by 260 Youth Peer club volunteers across all branches to talk to households about the dangers of early marriage, teenage pregnancy and contraceptive use. A total of 3,000 people were reached by 260 volunteers during the period.



Community Meetings

Community meetings have been held in Moyamba, Pujehun, Kailahu, Koinadugu, Kono and Bo branches focusing on the dangers of early marriage, pregnancy, and contraceptive use. The meetings were attended by 240 people.

Staff Training

In order to improve branch efficiency, a two-day planning meeting for Branch Health Officers and Health Coordinators took place at the Western area branch office. Fourteen Branch Health Officers, three Health Coordinators, the Director of Programmes and the Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator attended the meeting.

Staff discussed the proposed scaling-up strategy for the Community Based Health project as outlined during the redesign process which took place in 2009. They also discussed the new monitoring, reporting and referral formats for community volunteers.

During the quarter, 784 monitoring and reporting forms for use by the Branch Health Officers, Coaches and Community Volunteers were developed and distributed to all

Awareness raising

A one-day sensitization and public awareness raising campaign on H1N1 was organized by 280 Red Cross volunteers across all branches. Volunteers reached approximately 1,500 people using megaphones, and visited public places such as markets, schools, and parks to disseminate key health messages on the disease.

During the quarter, 280 Red Cross Volunteers in 13 branches took part in the sensitisation and awareness raising campaign on preventing malaria, TB and Lassa fever. The campaign reached 7,000 people.



Malaria keep-up project

Malaria can be easily prevented by proper use of bednets. A project has been implemented in Western Area, Bombali, Tonkolili, Kono, Kenema, Bo, Pujehun and Moyamba branches to ensure that the nets are being properly used. Volunteers visit people in their homes to advise on correct usage.

Additionally, 1,250 volunteer visit booklets for data collection by the malaria keep-up volunteers have been developed and distributed to all eight branches. This will ensure effective recording and monitoring.

Looking Ahead

During the remainder of the year, SLRCS plan to do the following:

- Build five birthing houses in Koinadugu and four other branches.
- Conduct refresher training for 360 volunteers on promoting good hygiene, clean water and sanitation, and 40 volunteers on Lassa fever prevention and control.
- Conduct quarterly meetings to strengthen Mothers' Club, TBAs, hygiene promoters, malaria keep-up volunteers, and Youth Peer Educators.
- Conduct quarterly sensitisation on malaria, Lassa Fever, TB, immunization and HIV.
- Provide seeds and tools for the mothers' club garden, and carry out house-to-house visits.
- Train Youth Peer Educators on drama and stage monthly outreach performances
- Provide home based care kits containing medical items needed for self-treatment
- Provide income generating activities for people living with HIV and AIDS.