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ANNUAL REPORT

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Our purpose

The prevention or relief of poverty or financial hardship in communities in Sierra Leone and England by providing or assisting in the provision of education, training, healthcare projects and all the necessary support designed to enable individuals to generate a sustainable income and be self-sufficient.

Trustees

Rita Edmond - Founder & Director

Comfort Olaosebikan - Secretary

James Sesay – Treasurer

Majorie Brabazon – Trustee

Shamick Edmond - Trustee

Natasha Din-Gabisi - Trustee

Highlights

- We were successful in securing a National Lottery grant to run our Eat Well to Stay Well Project in London
- We launched a mentoring programme in Sierra Leone
- We launched a business support and mentoring programme in the UK
- We received money from a corporate funder to improve visibility, we used the money to:
 1. Do a communications audit
 2. Take on two temporary, part-time roles - Communications Manager and Website Manager





Director's report

Last year we vowed to focus on three main areas:

- Make the school and the community projects we run in Sierra Leone start their journey towards self-sufficiency.
- Do more projects in the UK
- Generate more income and raise awareness through fundraising events

I am delighted to report that we are making good progress in all three areas. Earlier this year Rita, the director went to Sierra Leone to do a project audit.



The board agreed after reading the report that we would play more of a supporting role to the school. Rita's report identified a gap - Many youths are vocation-less. We have made inroads in addressing this with our mentoring programme. Our current mentee Saffiatu has been assisted with her peanut selling business so that she can raise enough money to start university. We have two more young people in the pipeline. We've also been able to give Ivor a grant to start a stationary business that will lead to a printing business. This business will increase revenue for our projects give Ivor additional income. We want to say a huge thank to supporters in hull for their contribution to this venture.



After successfully securing a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund we launched our Eat Well to Stay Well Project on the Silverlock Estate in London. Elderly residents pay a nominal fee to do a 45 minute exercise class, all of the exercises can be done while seated. Participants then sit down to a well-balanced, light meal, where they can talk to the instructor who is also a nutritionist. Ideas are shared for easy healthy meals. There's a lot of laughter - combatting the isolation that older people can experience. The programme has been running since March. Regular participants have noticed improved mobility and less joint pain. As well as feeling less isolated.

We've had two successful events so far this year, one was a dinner in Hull which has generated much needed funds for the school garden project in Sierra Leone.

We've been able to take on a Communications Manager who will focus on social media, improving engagement and increasing our fundraising efforts. Our website is getting a facelift and will be updated more regularly by our Website Manager. We want to say a huge thank you to Capital Group.



Financial Summary

Financially we have had another record year (1st Feb 2022 to 31st Jan 2023), with total income increasing from £16,642 to £21,770 and total expenditure increasing from £15,775 to £19,381.

The increase in income can be attributed to:

- A higher donation from Capital Group, who continue to support the work we do in Sierra Leone and the UK
- Eat Well to Stay Well grant we received from the National Lottery Community Fund

The increase in expenditure can be attributed to:

- Communications audit
- Project costs related to Eat Well to Stay Well grant
- Upgrading website
- Social media plan and execution

Our current bank balance remains healthy, with a net balance of £5,009.00 as of 1st November 2023.

Financial aims for next year include the following:

- Scaling and tweaking our events to maximise ticket sales and monthly donations
- Utilising our network to receive good quality second hand clothes and items, suitable for resale in both the UK and Sierra Leone
- Increasing our social media presence with a focus on highlighting the impact monthly donations can have on individuals in the school
- Research and apply for more grants with the support of experts



Spotlight



Saffiatu was to be part of our pilot micro finance project. Initially we had hoped to give her money to improve her business, but we were pleasantly surprised to find out that Saffiatu had other plans - to pursue education. Therefore mentoring and business support was more appropriate.

Saffiatu attended the Ivor Leigh Memorial school so she is alumni. After leaving the school she went to Oman to work as a maid. Unfortunately, when covid hit she found herself jobless and decided to return home to Freetown.

Since her return she has completed a diploma course, done an internship with Patriotic Youth and Adolescent Advocacy Network and is now applying to do a degree in law.

Saffiatu has been selling peanuts and other things to take care of her needs she, has used her profits to pay for her education. She meets regularly with her mentor Doreen who offers her business and general support.



We've launched a similar project in the UK. Trustees give skills pro-bono a prospective entrepreneur to pilot their business. If the pilot is successful a percentage of the profit goes back to CESO as a donation. We then assist them to tweak and start their business before passing them to a mentor to grow the business.

We've had great fun working with Tina. We helped her put on a pop up cafe. We handled the marketing, some of the cooking, setting up the venue for the day and serving. We're happy to report that Tina made a profit and gave a 10% donation to CESO.

After a review meeting Tina decided that the pop-up was too much marketing and she'd much rather do a market stall and catering for private events.

We've since helped her to be registered as a food business with her local authority, so that she can trade. Once she is comfortable trading we'll get her a business mentor. We hope she'll continue to partner with us and be a regular donor, to book <https://afrofusioncafe.uk> or @afrofusioncafe on Instagram.



Vote of thanks

We couldn't do what we do without our community/ our tribe, that is you. Thank you so much for all you do.

Whether you've attended one or all of our events, donated £10 or £1000, volunteered, become a committee member, helped us complete a form or with admin, raised funds, partnered with us, shared a post or told someone about us. We appreciate you!

If you'd like to become a committee member or a volunteer please speak to any of the board.

Ways to donate



You can now donate directly on social media.

<https://facebook.com/cesoprojects> click

donate. On Instagram we'll have regular posts asking for donations

<https://instagram.com/ceso.projects>



Click donate on <https://cesoprojects.org.uk>



Login or download the app chose Community Empowerment Support Organisation, then shop as you usually would

