

Village Partnership Newsletter



1 Big News!

We're thrilled to share the incredible progress of our Village Partnership program in Samie and Fengehun villages! Thanks to your generous support, these communities are taking ownership of their futures and developing sustainable solutions to improve their lives.

Fengehun Gears Up for Palm Oil Processing Powerhouse!



Fengehun has chosen a palm oil processing machine as their enterprise project. This machine has the capacity to process two tons of palm oil per day. Currently, palm oil

production is labor-intensive and wasteful. This machine will revolutionize the process, boosting efficiency and maximizing output. The processed oil can even be stored for up to two years, ensuring a steady income stream throughout the year.

and with abundant palm trees nearby and neighboring communities eager to utilize this service, Fengehun is poised to become a regional palm oil processing hub. Once word spreads that there is a palm oil processing machine nearby, those communities will bring their palm fruits to be processed. They will charge a fee for use, either cash or by keeping one of the barrels of oil.

I recently visited Fengehun and met with the community leaders who will manage this exciting project. While we are waiting for the machine to be shipped, they will begin constructing a safe and secure building to house the machine, demonstrating their commitment to this initiative. I was able to visit the field where the building will be constructed while I was there in January, and hear firsthand the excitement that the community has about this project.



The field where a building will be placed to house the palm oil machine.

Community Ownership at the Heart of the Project

One of the most valuable lessons learned during my visit is the importance of community ownership. While we offer guidance and support, the decisions ultimately lie with the community. For example, I initially suggested building a wall around the processing facility. However, upon learning that the community didn't feel it was necessary, we happily adjusted our plans.



Photos from my visit to Fengehun

Johanese Baun is the project lead for this in Sierra Leone, and I had a call with him a few weeks ago to answer some of the questions I had about the setup of the enterprise committee. Every question I asked JB about this project, his first answer was, "Well it's up to the community to decide." Everything about this begins and ends with community ownership!

Next Steps

Next up is completing the construction of the building for the machines and training the committees while we wait for the machines to ship. Soon, CRC will also begin training the finance and management people and the company we purchased the palm oil machine from will train the maintenance committee.

While the CRC and Mercy members of our VP Committee will be there to supervise to provide and technical support, the Enterprise Management Committee will oversee all aspects of the project.

This seven-person committee is comprised entirely of community members and is chaired by a woman in the community. This committee has sub-committees dedicated to finance and maintenance, ensuring responsible management and long-term sustainability. The Finance Committee is made up of members who have previous experience with village table banking and will be in charge of the finances and bookkeeping for the enterprise (however, all of the funds will be held at a physical bank, not at a village table bank). The Maintenance Committee is made up of members of the community who have experience with machine maintenance and will be in charge of maintaining the equipment.

"Well, it's up to the community to decide."



SAMMIE VILLAGE TO BUILD A MATERNAL HEALTH OUTPOST

Once things are set up in Fengehun, we will move forward with an infrastructure project in Sammie. Given its remote location, Sammie has chosen a critical infrastructure project: a maternal and child health outpost. This vital facility will provide a safe and secure environment for women to deliver babies under the care of a skilled midwife. Both CRC and Mercy Hospital are working closely with the Ministry of Health to ensure this project's success. Once the clinic is operational, Sammie will then embark on their chosen enterprise project.



Left: Photo of the area Sammie Village has cleared for their MCH outpost

WITNESSING THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF EMPOWERMENT

Seeing these communities flourish with increased resources and autonomy is truly inspiring. The Village Partnership program is empowering villages to chart their own course towards a brighter future. The positive impact will undoubtedly extend beyond Sammie and Fengehun, creating a ripple effect that benefits the entire region.

We're also excited to announce that Mercy Hospital has begun renovations on the clinic in Manjama Village, potentially paving the way for their inclusion in the Village Partnership program!

Thank you once again for your invaluable support. Together, we are making a lasting difference in the lives of these communities!



Spending in 2023:

- **Fengehun and Samie:**
\$56,336.10
- **Lemblema:**
\$33,112.20
- **General VP Spending:**
\$3,802.65