

# Village Partnership Newsletter



**HELPING  
CHILDREN  
WORLDWIDE**

## 1 Big News!

We're thrilled to share the incredible progress of our Village Partnership program. I had planned to send out this newsletter earlier in the year, but I wanted to wait until we could celebrate the grand opening of the palm oil processing machine!

## CRC Returns to Fengehun to Refresh Firmly Rooted Family Strengthening Workshop

In April after our last newsletter, the CRC visited the families who had been trained in our Firmly Rooted Family Strengthening Workshop for refresher training. This was a great opportunity to reinforce the skills and knowledge they had acquired. The CRC's family

strengthening training focuses on fostering positive relationships between caregivers and their children. Through engaging activities like games, songs, and crafts, caregivers and their children learn effective parenting techniques. They are taught the importance of the "3Ts" – Talk, Touch, and Time – in building strong bonds with their children.

Additionally, the training incorporates emotional intelligence training to help caregivers and children understand and manage their own emotions. This workshop recently underwent an evaluation by a researcher named Dr. Sarah Neville from Boston College and findings from this research project were presented at the International Conference on Adoption Research (ICAR) in July. This conference is mainly focused on domestic and international adoption, but recently has expanded to include those working to prevent family separation like the CRC. In a space mainly focused on researching the effects of adoption and family separation, the preventative work that CRC does was considered groundbreaking. After the ICAR Conference, CRC staff George Kulanda and HCW Staff Dr. Laura



Scan the QR code to watch a 10 second video of caregivers and children doing a dance!



**Firmly Rooted Family Strengthening Workshop  
in Fengehun**



Horvath presented the findings alongside Dr. Neville at the Christian Alliance for Orphans Research Symposium, where it reached 200 in person and 1000+ virtual participants. The CRC's work has worldwide recognition!



**Dr. Sarah, George, and Laura on the stage at CAFO presenting the research.**

## Grand Opening of Palm Oil Machine in Fengehun!

As I shared in my last newsletter, Fengehun village is moving into the enterprise portion of the project with the purchase of a palm oil processing machine that will provide the community with an income-generating enterprise that can benefit vulnerable community members. Fengehun selected the location for the palm oil processing machine building in January.

I'm happy to report that the building is now complete, and the machine has been transported from Freetown. We're excited to announce that the grand opening ceremony was held in October. This palm oil machine will enable the local community to process palm fruit into valuable oil, creating jobs, and empowering small-scale farmers.

The palm oil harvesting season will resume in March, so we anticipate that the community will start to see a significant increase in income by this time next year, as the palm oil processing machine becomes fully operational and the harvested oil is sold.



**Photos at Grand Opening of the palm oil machine in it's new building!**



**Scan the QR code to see more photos from the completed building:**





## SAMMIE VILLAGE: MATERNAL HEALTH OUTPOST IN 2024

We hope to resume work on this project in Sammie Village by building the maternal health outpost early next year. A maternal and child health outpost is the lowest tier of healthcare facility in Sierra Leone that provides essential services for pregnant women, mothers, and children. A facility like this allows women to have a safe place to give birth under the care of a skilled midwife or health worker. It provides essential services such as prenatal care, delivery assistance, postnatal care, and child immunization. Additionally, these outposts can play a vital role in addressing maternal and child health challenges, such as reducing maternal mortality and improving child survival rates. A safe and secure facility where women can deliver babies under the care of a skilled midwife will be invaluable to this community.

Currently, the community relies on a simple thatched-roof structure for medical visits, highlighting the urgent need for a more permanent and functional facility. Despite these limitations, this community has demonstrated remarkable engagement and enthusiasm, eagerly anticipating the start of construction next year.



**Current Structure**



### **Members of the Community gathered to get progress report on the project.**

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.



### **Photo of villagers gathering in front of the area they have cleared for their MCH outpost**



Scan the QR code to  
hear from the  
leadership of  
Sammie village  
regarding their  
experience being a  
part of this project!



## REFLECTING ON OUR PROGRESS SO FAR

Originally planned as a three-year initiative, our Village Partnership Program is now entering its fifth year. While the slow pace of progress may seem discouraging from an American perspective, it's important to remember that development work in Africa operates on a different timeline. Supply chain disruptions, the COVID-19 pandemic, and competing interests within the CRC and Mercy Hospital have influenced the project's pace. Despite these challenges, we have dedicated significant time and resources to developing these projects, working closely with communities, and ensuring that our approach aligns with their needs and those of our local partners. Despite the extended timeline, we've achieved remarkable results:

- 100 benches and desks
- 81 families trained in Firmly Rooted Family Strengthening Workshops and receiving school supplies
- 5 wells built or repaired
- 2 latrines built
- 1 meeting hall
- Ongoing Case Management Support and Medical Outreach

### On its way

- 1 health outpost
- 2 palm oil machines

= 3,650 people directly impacted

and ~36,000 people in the surrounding communities impacted

## NEXT STEPS

After completing all the projects in these 3 villages, we will be taking a pause in onboarding new village partners in order to evaluate the impact of our Village Partnership Program to date. This is crucial for several reasons. First, by pausing the onboarding of new villages, we can ensure that our enterprise projects in the current villages are fully operational and effectively supporting community needs, rather than diluting our resources and attention across multiple locations. Second, it allows us to assess the effectiveness of our strategies and identify areas for improvement. Third, it helps us understand the challenges and successes faced by these communities, which can inform our approach in future villages. Finally, it provides valuable data and lessons learned that can be shared with others working in similar contexts. This pause in onboarding new villages does not mean that our work has stopped; there is still a lot of important work happening that you can support.

While we may not be adding new villages to the roster this year, there are still many ways you can contribute to the success of our Village Partnership Program. Your support can help fund ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities, as well as training programs that are essential for building the capacity of community members. Additionally, we will keep you informed about new projects that are being discussed with the United Methodist Church Sierra Leone Annual Conference at the close of 2024. We will also keep you updated on the progress of these villages and inform you of next steps.





More Photos from Firmly Rooted Family Strengthening Workshop in Fengehun

# THANK YOU!!

We are incredibly grateful to our generous donors for their continued support of our Village Partnership Program. Your contributions are more than just a handout; they are a hand-up that empowers communities and transforms lives.

Your support is making a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals and families. Thank you for your compassion and commitment to our

mission!