



## **Sierra Leone Community Based Health Care Programme 2010 End of Year Report**

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### **Executive Summary**

Thanks to the generous support of Soroptimist International Wales South Health Education & Hygiene Trust throughout 2010, the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's (SLRCS) Community Based Health Programme has provided life-saving support to improve health and hygiene in vulnerable communities.

An aim of the programme is to contribute to national efforts to significantly reduce morbidity and mortality with a focus on children under 5 years and women of child-bearing age. During the year, Red Cross staff and volunteers have reached communities throughout Sierra Leone, distributing health messages on maternal and child health, raising awareness on the prevention and control of communicable diseases, and improving sanitation and access to safe water.

Throughout the year our work has continued to underpin SLRCS's promotion of Lassa Fever prevention and control. Following the suspected outbreak of Lassa Fever in Bombali and Port Loko last quarter, Red Cross staff and volunteers closely monitored the situation and dramatically increased numbers of awareness raising activities on Lassa Fever across all branches. This has ensured that no cases of Lassa Fever have been reported during this quarter.

## Highlights

Here are some just some highlights of what we have been able to achieve this year:

- 290 people took part in The Annual Mothers' Congress in Freetown, which showcased the achievements of the Mother's Club throughout the year. The purpose of the day was to celebrate and recognise the remarkable achievements of the congress in promoting Reproductive and Child health.
- 52 quarterly sensitization campaigns on the prevention and control of communicable diseases such as malaria, TB, Lassa Fever were undertaken by 280 Red Cross Volunteers in all 13 branches. A total of 22,160 people were reached during both campaigns which took place between March and December 2010. Volunteers used megaphones, visiting market places, playgrounds, parks and schools.
- 144 wells were chlorinated by Red Cross volunteers and are now benefiting 20,762 people.



## Achievements during 2010

### HIV prevention and reducing stigma

Throughout 2010, Youth Peer Educators conducted 134 drama performances in local schools and communities in order to raise much-needed awareness on HIV and AIDS related issues. These performances were watched by a total of 59,726 people.

In addition, Youth Peer Educators conducted 6,720 awareness-raising sessions in schools and communities, reaching a further 29,544 children and young people.

The 80 monthly meetings conducted throughout the year across all branches by Youth Peer Educators provided a platform for volunteers to reflect on past activities and achievements as well as an opportunity to plan for future activities.

In order to commemorate World AIDS Day on 1st December, Health Promotional talks on HIV and AIDS care and mitigation were delivered to 923 children and young people.

### Care, support and treatment

Home Based Care facilitators and Branch Health Officers made 1080 home visits to people living with HIV and AIDS in Bo, Moyamba, Bombali, and Koinadugu in order to support and supervise care givers, and provide essential counselling.

## Maternal and Child Health

Red Cross Volunteers conducted 1787 home visits, disseminating crucial health related messages to 13,274 household members including pregnant, and lactating women and their husbands.



Health messages included vital information on exclusive breast feeding, weaning food, Nutrition, Ante-Natal and Post-Natal care, and Environmental sanitation. During “Mother and child week”, SLRCS collaborated with both the Ministry of Health and UNICEF in order to raise awareness on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. In addition over 3,000,000 Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets, Vitamin A capsules, Albendazole, and Oral Polio Vaccine were distributed during the event.



## **Immunization and growth monitoring**

During home visits by Red Cross volunteers, 547 children were found to be fully immunised against vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition, 567 children under five were traced and referred for immunisation.

Two National Immunisation Days against polio for children under 5 took place in January and May, with more than 1,150 volunteers participating. Volunteers successfully reached a total of 900,900 children.

Red Cross volunteers also monitored the growth of 2930 children under five. Of this figure, 2205 were found to be healthy while 777 were severely malnourished and immediately referred to appropriate health centres for treatment.

## **Prevention control of communicable diseases**



Red Cross Volunteers conducted 52 quarterly sensitization campaigns across all 13 branches on the prevention and control of communicable diseases such as malaria, TB and Lassa Fever . A total of 22,160 people were reached during both campaigns which took place between March and December. Volunteers used megaphones and visited market places, playgrounds, parks and schools in order to spread the message within their communities.

With support from the Global Fund, Red Cross volunteers conducted important awareness-raising activities on malaria and the proper use of insecticide treated nets, reaching 1118 people in Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba and Pujehun. In addition, 720 Community motivators and 2,050 community volunteers participated in bed net distribution and 'Hang Up' activities to ensure they were being used correctly.

## **Early detection and control of Lassa Fever**

Following the suspected outbreak of Lassa Fever in Bombali and Port Loko and the deaths of two people in Kenema last quarter, Red Cross staff and volunteers carried out continuous monitoring of the situation and increased numbers of awareness raising activities on Lassa Fever in schools and communities across Sierra Leone.

These included health talks and drama performances on the prevention and control of Lassa Fever in the North and Eastern regions of the country. In addition, a symposium on Lassa Fever was organized for School children and community members in Bo, Bombali, Pujehun, Moyamba, Kenema, Kailahun, Koinadugu, Bonthe & Matru, and Port Loko. Inter Schools quiz competitions on Lassa Fever, Malaria and TB were also conducted in many regions and 70 Community sensitisation sessions on prevention and control of Lassa Fever were carried out across all branches. No further cases of Lassa Fever have been reported.

## Hygiene promotion and safe water

During the year, 144 wells were chlorinated by 60 Red Cross volunteers with support and technical expertise from the Ministry of Health. A total of 20,762 people are now benefiting from these wells for drinking, cooking, washing and other domestic purposes. In addition, 100 water and sanitation volunteers were trained in Bo, Moyamba, Pujehun and Bonthe for the maintenance of wells and latrines and information dissemination.



Awareness raising activities about good hygiene practices were carried out in communities across all 13 branches.

Cholera Demonstration Kits were distributed to 300 Red Cross Volunteers, who used the kits to teach their local community about how to prepare Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) and prepare for a diarrhea outbreak.

Across all branches, 420 volunteers continued with their house to house health promotional activities with an emphasis on the crucial importance of hand washing.

## Mother's Clubs

Between January and December 2010, 38 community meetings were held by 1246 Mothers' Club members focusing on issues of early marriage, teenage pregnancy, unwanted pregnancy and contraceptive use. Mothers' Club members also made home visits to households in their neighbourhood to talk to them about these issues. 4,600 people; mainly teenagers were reached.

The Annual Mothers' Congress took place in Freetown, showcasing the achievements of the Mother's Club throughout the year.

290 people took part on the day including Mothers Congress members, SLRCS staff and other volunteers, who marched through Freetown to Brookfields.

Other partners from Ministry of Health and UNICEF took part in the programme. The purpose of the day was to celebrate and recognise the remarkable achievements of the congress in promoting Reproductive and Child health.

**Thank you for your wonderful support, you are helping to save lives**