

# CUP II TEAM VISIT TO MAKORIE, SIERRA LEONE

7 – 16 February 2013

## GENERAL

This report contains notes collected during a Communities United Partnership II (CUP II) Team visit to Sierra Leone, Africa, from 7 to 16 February 2013. The primary purpose of the trip was to visit the community of Makorie (Bombali District) to assess the mid-point progress of CUP II's 3-year village partnership.

The Team also paid follow-up visits to the five original CUP villages, all in the Bombali district: Makai, Kunsho, Makombi, Maberreh, and Makiteh.

Additionally, the Team visited the First Step complex outside Freetown; the Wesleyan Hospital in Kamakwie; the Government hospital in Makeni; and, the School for the Hearing Impaired also in Makeni.

For additional information on this trip, please contact Michael Gething at [gethingm@hotmail.com](mailto:gethingm@hotmail.com).

## CUP II TEAM TRAVELERS

- Michael Gething (Team Leader), Angie Shultz, Jim Roszell, Chris Moore, and Kim Soots.



CUP II Team: Kim Soots, Angie Schultz, Michael Gething, Jim Roszell, and Chris Moore.

## TRIP GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

- Primary goal was to assess the progress of CUP II's 3-year partnership with the village of Makorie.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Meet with Makorie's Chief and the Village Development Committee to assess progress to date and identify/prioritize further activities; interview and photograph each family; coordinate a Day Camp for the village children.
2. Conduct follow-up visits to the original CUP villages (Makai, Kunsho, Makombi, Maberreh, and Makiteh).
3. Visits to: the First Step complex outside Freetown; the Government hospital in Makeni; the Wesleyan Hospital in Kamakwie; and, the School for the Hearing Impaired in Makeni.

**OBJECTIVE 1: ASSESS PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS; MEET WITH EACH FAMILY;  
COORDINATE DAY CAMP FOR THE VILLAGE CHILDREN.**

### **PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS**

This visit by CUP II volunteers served primarily to assess progress at the mid-point of the 3-year partnership with the village of Makorie. Toward that end, the Team met with Chief Fornah and the Village Development Committee (VDC) members to discuss activities accomplished in Makorie since the start of the Partnership in mid-2011. Those activities include: a drilled well; nine VIP latrines; distribution of goats; distribution of chickens (layers); distribution of rice seed and ground nut seed; and, training sessions on agriculture, hygiene, well maintenance, and animal husbandry.



**Makorie's drilled well (February 2013).**

Additionally, construction of a grain store was being finalized during our visit. (See photos below.)



The Team also took the opportunity to discuss other activities which the VDC would like to accomplish within the remaining time of the partnership and beyond. With the assistance of the World Hope International (WHI) Makeni staff, including Bernadette, Aruna, and Mariatu, the Team discussed and noted activities as outlined and prioritized by the VDC, noted below.

During our time with the VDC, we emphasized the importance of sustainability to any endeavor undertaken. It was very apparent—based on the amount of activities accomplished to date—that Makorie’s Chief and VDC are extremely energized and motivated to improve life in their village. They are eager to accomplish development efforts as well as ensure future growth opportunities. We emphasized the criticality of leadership, foresight, and proper planning to ensure sustainability as they continue to develop, grow, and generate income.

It was interesting to note that at each of our meetings at the village gathering area, the banner we presented to the Chief during our initial meeting in January 2012 was always hung. (The bed-sheet sized banner contains traced hand-prints and names of students and faculty from Community Christian School (CCS) in Richmond, Indiana; at the top of the banner is written, “CCS Loves Makorie.”) According to Bernadette, the banner is held in high regard by the people of Makorie and they are appreciative of the message it represents.

Following is Makorie’s leadership and expressed/prioritized needs:

### **Makorie Leadership:**

Mohammed Fornah: Chief of Makorie

Village Development Committee (VDC) Members:

Brahma Fornah (Chairman)

Philip Baupua (Secretary)

Fatmata Jalloh (Chair Lady)

Gbassay Kaba (Treasurer)

Isatu Kamara (Whip)

Santigie Couteh (Advisor)

Musa Karbo (Advisor)

### **Needs expressed by VDC:**

1. Health. Health is a major concern, with the primary ailments being Malaria, falls (from palm trees), and hernias (currently, four lateral and six umbilical hernias in Makorie). Kunsho is the closest clinic; many patients are advised to go to Makeni hospitals.
2. Milling machine. Closest milling machine is 6 miles away. They carry grain to have it milled and then carry it back to the village.
3. Community Center/Church. There is a traveling clinic that moves among various villages during the rainy season but it does not stop in Makorie because there is no sheltered building. A Community Center would resolve this and would also serve as Makorie's church.
4. New chicken coop. Thieves have been stealing chickens from Makorie's current chicken coop.
5. Assistance with Hope for Children (HFC).
6. Educational help with orphans.
7. Micro-Credits.

We asked the VDC to prioritize the above list:

1. Community Center/Church
2. HFC education
3. Milling machine
4. Micro-credits
5. Chicken coop

## **MAKORIE HOUSEHOLDS/FAMILIES:**

We met with and photographed each family/household that was present during our visit. The households and numbers of family members are noted below.

**Note:** For reference, a drawing of Makorie is included at the end of this report, noting the location of each household as well as the latrines, wells, and other structures.

### **Households in Makorie:**

**(head of household: total number in family, including children/orphans)**

1. Moses Kalokoh: 10 including 4 children
2. Fatmate Mansaray: 14 including 7 children of which 3 are orphans
3. Fatamela Jallah: 12 including 5 children of which 1 is an orphan
4. Santigie Conteh: 20 including 10 children of which 3 are orphans
5. James Conteh: 20 including 16 children of which 3 are orphans
6. Musa Kargbo: 18 including 7 children
7. Philip Bamgura: 13 including 5 children
8. Mohammed Fornah: 15 including 4 children of which 1 is an orphan
9. Brahma Fornah: 14 including 6 children of which 1 is an orphan

## COORDINATE DAY CAMP FOR VILLAGE CHILDREN

As we did during our first visit to Makorie in January 2012, the CUP II Team coordinated a Day Camp for the children of Makorie. And, just as it happened last year, there were many other children present from surrounding villages. Prior to the Day Camp, we anticipated 100 children; we were surprised to count nearly 200 children in attendance! Thanks to the efforts of Bernadette, Aruna, Mariatu, Santigie (Pastor from Makai), and Bakarr (one of our drivers), as well as elders and some of the village youth, the Team coordinated various events that included: 1) crafting necklaces and bracelets with beads and string; 2) drawing/writing on a bed-sheet banner (similar to the one presented during our first meeting in January 2012) for WHI; 3) crafting party hats out of paper and stickers; 4) soccer games, Frisbee, and throwing an American football. There was music and dancing, food and drinks, and, we left several soccer balls, American footballs, and Frisbees with Makorie. Once again, the Day Camp was a huge success, serving as an awesome opportunity for fellowship and strengthening relationships with the adults as well as the youth of Makorie.



## OBJECTIVE 2: CONDUCT FOLLOWUP VISITS TO THE ORIGINAL CUP VILLAGES.

### GENERAL

As we did during our January 2012 trip to Makorie, we conducted follow-up visits to the original CUP villages of Makai, Kunsho, Makombi, Maberreh, and Makiteh. This trip, however, we were extremely fortunate to have Angie Shultz as part of our team. Angie was a member of the original CUP assessment team that first visited Sierra Leone in 2005. Moreover, Angie lived in Makeni for a few months at a time over a period of 3 years. During that time, Angie would visit each village, establishing strong relationships, translating needs, assisting with training, and fostering a foundation of trust and good will between WHI, CUP, and the five villages. Indeed, to the people of the five CUP villages, Angie is nothing short of a rock star! It was fitting, then, that Angie led the team's follow-up visits.

While two of our team members visited the Wesleyan Hospital in Kamakwie, Angie, along with Mariatu and the rest of the CUP Team, visited each of the original CUP villages. For Angie, this was extremely special as she had not been to Sierra Leone since conducting end-of-CUP interviews in February 2011.

Following are Angie's notes and observations for each village.

### Maberreh

*Present: Alfred (head teacher and VDC Chairman for Maberreh), a few students and their parents (all other VDC members were not available, but remain active in the VDC), Mariatu Kargbo, Angie Schultz, Kim Soots and Jim Roszell.*

*Maberreh was not aware that we would be coming.*

### **Positives:**

- Attitudes within the village are changing and the community is more united than ever
- Alfred believes that the training of CUP and increased religious (Christian) activities have contributed to this
- Maberreh is experiencing full participation in all activities now (this is a change from previous years)
- Women in Development Association (WIDA), a women's initiative started during the first year of CUP, continues to be strong within the community meeting once per month



- The VDC meets once per month and a process is in place to replace members that move (the community votes on a new representative and they are trained by the remaining VDC members)
- The well and latrines were clean and well maintained (a new fence is needed for the well – plans are in place for this)
- The grain store is nearly complete

#### Issues:

- Road Maintenance
- Accommodation for goats
- Some older children are not in school as the school fees still prove to be a challenge (we had a discussion about the community coming together to support the needs of these students as an investment in the future of Maberreh – Alfred and others participating in the meeting were receptive)
- Three HFC children have been dropped in that community
- Three children under the age of three have died in the past two years – each child was sick for less than 24 hours, and experienced a high fever and trembling (many say the cause is “witchcraft”)

#### Expressed Needs:

- None

#### General Comments from Angie:

Seeing Maberreh in such a positive place was absolutely breathtaking. This is a community that, for years, has struggled to work together. They have a history of late or missed payments to the grain store after harvest and have lacked motivation. Typically, upon arrival, requests are made for needs within the community. During this visit, not a single request was made as they have found ways to solve problems with the resources they have. The tone was upbeat and hopeful. This came as more than a pleasant surprise to me personally and gave me the most hope for the CUP model in future communities. My main concern is the three under five deaths.

#### Makombi

*Present: VDC Members (Abu Sesay, Jane Conteh, Lahai Bangura, Mariana Sesay, Momi Adama, Amadu Sesay, Quenda Fornah), other community members, Mariatu Kargbo, Kim Soots, Angie Schulz and Jim Roszell.*

*Makombi was not aware that we would be coming.*

### Positives:

- New school seems well maintained
- Latrines are clean and maintained
- The children are healthy overall
- Lessons in CUP training continue
- Cholera outbreak did not impact them (due to latrines and well)
- They are selling excess rice and groundnut seed for scholarships for students in need and community maintenance
- Church is nearly finished (started with CUP Funds)
- Community Center was constructed with no outside help
- No infant deaths
- They look forward to the opening of the Health Clinic in Makiteh, as they travel to Kunsho or Makeni for treatment now – they are finding that they have enough income to cover their medical expenses
- The VDC meets once per month and have a process in place to replace members that move (the community decides with VDC leadership in the nomination process and then the new member is trained)
- WIDA continues maintaining their own farm and sharing the profit amongst themselves – they meet every two weeks

### Issues:

- Drying floor needs some minor repairs (the VDC plans to purchase cement to make the repairs from interest from seed bank repayment)
- School needs some minor cement repairs (the VDC plans to address this, as well)
- The well is not draining properly, causing some back-up (Mariatu explained to the VDC how they could fix this with no funding necessary) – it is also not fenced, but sticks are already cut to fence it during the rainy season when they can work with the land
- Malaria and hernias are problems among the men (but nothing out of the ordinary, according to the group)
- Some families are not able to pay schools fees due to financial constraints, however, they are still allowed to attend (fees are less than a dollar per term, per child) – Mariatu expressed that education should be seen as important as food, as this is the future of Makombi – the advice was received well
- The poverty may exist after one poor harvest – Mariatu advised the community to support hard workers after a poor harvest, to work together to address these needs
- A number of HFC children were dropped

### Expressed Needs:

- None

### General Comments from Angie:

The greatest achievement in this community is the Community Center, built completely from their own funding. They now use this structure to host fundraising events for the VDC/community. Again, the attitude was positive and the CUP trainings/lessons were evident in the answers received during the interview. I was very pleased by this visit.

### Makiteh

*Present: VDC Members (Tepie Fornah, Kobba Bangura, Yaw Posseh) Teachers, Section Chief, New Pastor, women representatives, Mariatu Kargbo, Angie Schultz, Kim Soots and Jim Roszell.*

*Makiteh was not aware that we would be coming.*

### Positives:

- Grain store (funded by CUP) is complete and filling up quickly (25% full currently)
- Well is clean and functioning well – it is fenced with wood, but concrete has already been purchased to make a better barrier (a small water collection had started and Mariatu explained how to correct this with no cost)
- New clinic is complete, only waiting on medicine and staff to open
- New church (funded completely by Makiteh) is nearly complete
- Groundnut and Rice Seed are plentiful
- Latrines are well kept and clean
- Lessons learned in CUP trainings continue
- VDC continues to meet once per month
- WIDA continues to meet and share profits as well as contribute some to the new church

### Issues:

- All goats have died (disease outbreak that effected many of the CUP communities), the sheep were not impacted
- Trash was found throughout the community (Angie encouraged them to be aware of this, as other communities now look to them as a role model)
- Confusion about VDC replacement – they had not replaced members that have moved, as they were waiting on WHI approval (a discussion was lead by Mariatu

and Angie about them taking full ownership of CUP, the message was well received)

**Expressed Needs:**

- None

**General Comments from Angie:**

Leadership has changed in the community, which raises some concern. The previous VDC Chairman for Makiteh was Pastor James whom now resides in Kunsho. The section chief, who lead the meeting, has shown evidence of some corruption in the past, however, the VDC members that were present were strong and had a positive attitude. With little experience, they still managed to lead their community in the completion of a new church funded completely on their own! This task alone far exceeds any project in any other community! They are positive and hopeful about the future and WIDA remains strong.

**Makai**

*Present: VDC Members (including chairman, Santigie Kalokoh), general community, Mariatu Kargbo, Kim Soots and Angie Schultz*

*Makai was aware that we would be visiting.*

**Positives:**

- Latrines were well kept and clean
- Goats continue to multiply, despite some sickness and deaths
- New grain store complete (CUP funding) and actively used (cats keep the rats/mice out)
- Interest from grain store is used to maintain the well, grain store and other community needs
- One bag of seed currently provides a 4-5 bag return (quality seed)
- New well is clean and well kept
- Overall health of community is good
- Agriculture training has proven helpful
- WIDA is still active, strong, meets monthly and provides micro credit opportunities for women in Makai
- CUP Training has given community members confidence to interact with other communities

- Beyond interest from grain store, the community will pay monthly “dues” (500 leones/month/house) for interest of the community (repairs, maintenance, scholarships, sickness, etc)
- VDC is active, strong and meets monthly (original five members still exist) – a plan is in place in case someone moves (community votes and VDC trains)
- Gari Processing Machine still actively used and provides income to the community

#### **Issues:**

- One latrine collapsed because it was on soft ground – the materials are still in tact and it can be reconstructed in a different location
- Several pieces of glass were found on the walking path – this was discussed during the meeting and the community was encouraged to take this into consideration, as they are now a model community
- The original well is leaking, but plans are underway to repair with cement – the pipes are also beginning to rust
- Drying floor needs repaired, WIDA plans to address this
- Some goats are dying (most are pregnant females)
- Some children are not going to school, especially in those families where there are many children (it was encouraged that the community support these children by holding fundraising activities)
- One miscarriage in the last year along with four children under five that died with symptoms of high fever and a quick death
- Two adults died after hernia operations (infection?) and one of “old age”
- One hearing impaired child cannot attend regular school and does not have educational opportunities (Foday Kamara)
- One HFC child was dropped

#### **Expressed Needs:**

- None

#### **General Comments from Angie:**

Makai has always been among the strongest of the CUP communities. Their leadership is unparalleled and this continues to be true upon this visit. Major highlights include: successful seed bank management, strong WIDA (with the addition of micro credit opportunities), and continued unity. The greatest concern is the number of deaths in the under five population. The attitude was incredibly upbeat and thanks were given for the training given to them through CUP. This seems to have the most powerful impact in this community.

## Kunsho

*Present: VDC Members, elders, Mariatu Kargbo, Angie Schultz and Kim Soots*

*Kunsho was aware that we would be visiting.*

### **Positives:**

- Goats are doing well
- Health of young and old is overall good
- Hygiene practices being implemented very well
- All children are attending school (no exclusion)
- Practices learned at the marriage retreat are still being implemented (no flogging of wives remains)
- VDC meets two times per month (this is a significant positive change from last year's update)
- WIDA is active and meeting at least once per month – they share profits and provide scholarships if necessary
- Not under five deaths and three adult deaths (due to "old age")
- Practice in place to replace VDC members that have gone (the community votes and training is given by the remaining VDC members)
- Improvement has been made in problem solving

### **Issues:**

- The clinic in Kunsho is not well staffed and it is difficult to get medical treatment there, most go to Makeni

### **Expressed Needs:**

- None

### **General Comments from Angie:**

Mike and Jim had the most concerns about Kunsho after their visit last year. The VDC did not appear to be active and a change in leadership had occurred. I saw just the opposite this year. Some VDC members were the same, but others had been replaced. They were not only active, but thriving. It appeared that they were working hand in hand with the elders and expressed no serious issues/needs. The meeting was only positive with many thanks and remembrance of the CUP trainings. The trainings, again, seemed to leave the greatest impact.

**OBJECTIVE 3: CONDUCT VISITS TO: FIRST STEP COMPLEX, GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL IN MAKENI, WESLEYAN HOSPITAL IN KAMAKWIE, SCHOOL FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED IN MAKENI.**

FIRST STEP. Upon our arrival to Freetown and while on our way to Makeni, we made a brief stop at the FIRST STEP Complex on the outskirts of Freetown. We met with Steve Grudda and several other FIRST STEP representatives. After a quick tour, we were on our way to Makeni.

Government Hospital (Makeni). The Team also visited the Government Hospital in Makeni. As one of our Team members, Chris Moore, is a general surgeon in Richmond, Indiana, it was a great opportunity for Chris to see the hospital, meet with the staff, and get a perspective on the hospital's condition and resources. Chris actually had the opportunity to "scrub in" to observe an ongoing operation. The rest of the Team toured the hospital. Having been completed in 2010, the Team expected the hospital to be in better condition than it was. There were broken windows, unsanitary practices and conditions, wells that go dry in the dry season, and many patients waiting outside or, if they were inside, they were practically on top of each other. We spoke with Alex, a visiting volunteer nurse from England who'd been at the hospital nearly a year. Alex felt the main problem at the hospital was the lack of leadership. He felt Management did little to improve things; and, also suggested fear and corruption were also contributing factors.

Wesleyan Hospital (Kamakwie). As mentioned previously, while most of the Team visited the original CUP villages (see Objective 2), two of the Team (Chris Moore and Michael Gething), along with Bernadette, visited the Wesleyan Hospital in Kamakwie. Kamakwie is 55 miles North-North West of Makeni, near the border with Guinea. But, the roads are in very bad condition, and, the 55 miles takes 3 hours to get there. We met with staff, toured the hospital, and were able to "scrub in" to observe ongoing surgeries. It was an awesome opportunity! We found the hospital understandably understaffed, but, they were in good spirits and very appreciative of our visit. For its age, the hospital was in good condition.

School for the Hearing Impaired (Makeni). The Team also took the opportunity to visit the School for the Hearing Impaired in Makeni. Visiting Sister Mary and the children has become a regular event for our teams over the last several years. Sister Mary and her staff do an incredible job of teaching and caring for these very special children. Much support is needed for the School.



## TEAM OUTBRIEF WITH THE WHI MAKENI STAFF

Before departing Makeni, the Team met with Bernadette and Aruna to discuss our experiences during our visit. We also discussed funding, activities to date, and outstanding activities.

Toward that end, Bernadette mentioned she and Aruna would be updating the Work Plan for Makorie, including activities accomplished to date as well as those activities remaining. We discussed some of the trainings yet to be received:

1. Agriculture training
2. Retreat (Relationships)
3. Sustainability
4. Health and Hygiene (started, but, continuous)
5. Problem-solving

We requested rough cost estimates for any remaining activities in order to determine the adequacy of existing CUP funds. Aruna and Bernadette both suggested these cost estimates should come from Saidu.

The CUP Team would like to visit Makorie again in 2014. February seems to be a good month for planning purposes. While there, we would welcome the opportunity to visit another candidate village for a potential partnership. We ask WHI's assistance in making this possible.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CUP II Team wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to WHI and all of those whose efforts supported our trip prior to, during, and upon our return. We realize in-country visits require an extraordinary amount of planning, coordination, logistics, communication, and efforts well beyond the routine. We are extremely grateful to the WHI staffs in Washington, D.C., especially Damarie Velazquez and Keith Norris; and, to the awesome staff in Freetown and Makeni, especially Saidu, Bernadette, Aruna, Mariatu, William, Brima, Baby Love, and Steve Grudda with FIRST STEP; and, to our dedicated drivers, Bakkar and Senegal. We ask God's blessing on all of them, not only for their support to us as a Team, but for their daily efforts toward improving the lives and securing the future of the people of Sierra Leone.



**Makeni WHI Staff (February 2013).**

Finally, we wish to thank the people of the village of Makorie. Once again, they graciously opened their hearts and offered their resources to us. Makorie continues to be a strong and greatly unified community, with an energized and enthusiastic VDC, grateful for the opportunity to improve their lives and excited about their future. They continue to place their trust in the CUP Team and in this partnership. We are grateful, honored, and humbled for the opportunity to make a positive, lifelong difference.

**Makorje (Bombali), Sierra Leone  
February 2013**

(not to scale)

