



 **oneVILLAGE**
PARTNERS

2019 Annual Report



DEAR PARTNERS,

For OneVillage Partners, 2019 was a year of growth and learning. Though we share our 2019 annual report in the midst of a global pandemic and face changes and uncertainty, we are excited to share with you the many achievements of our partner communities from last year.

In 2019, we grew our reach by providing a platform for 18 rural communities in Sierra Leone to thrive, and we drew up plans to expand to a new region. We learned that we are capable of accomplishing our goals and making a big impact. In 2019, your generosity and commitment to this mission touched the lives of 22,000 individuals in Sierra Leone. Thank you for investing in people.

We are grateful. Last year, for the first time ever, OneVillage Partners raised more than \$1 million in revenue. We are beyond grateful for the tremendous support that you have provided, year over year, in helping us grow our impact. The gratitude for your dedication extends throughout our partner communities. With your support, they are able to continue leading their own development.

We are proud. Our programs showed remarkable results in 2019. From achieving

programmatic impact to piloting our new Lead Program, our community partners are proud of their many accomplishments. We hope that you, too, are proud of the role that you play in helping them take steps towards social cohesion, inclusive leadership, gender equity, and resiliency.

We are committed. Despite our successes, we recognize that there is still more work to be done. Together, with our community partners, we will not rest until they have achieved their visions of thriving rural communities. This will require systemic and institutional change, organizational agility, and a continued commitment to building on people's incredible assets. Our community partners are committed, and so are we, to developing thriving, connected, and resilient communities.

Thank you for being a part of such a monumental year for OneVillage Partners. Thank you for being a part of this vision.

Jill LaLonde
Executive Director

Jeff Hall
Founder & Board Chair

OUR PROGRAMS

Working in Sierra Leone, West Africa, we partner with rural communities and assist them to develop sustainable solutions to their most pressing self-identified challenges, such as access to clean water and improving food security. Our programs empower new leaders to address these challenges and create new opportunities for women's economic empowerment. We accomplish our work through three programs.

Community Action guides communities to determine the challenges that they feel are most important to address and define a shared vision for development. Then, volunteer-leaders are trained to design, implement, and monitor projects that address those self-defined needs for the entire community. Communities implement up to three development projects under Community Action. Whole communities mobilize and build upon existing strengths and assets. Physical structures are the immediate outputs of this program, but longer-term outcomes also emerge, building the foundation for strong, prosperous communities.

Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) is an entirely picture-based program that empowers participants with financial planning, decision-making, and public speaking skills to enhance gender equity in communities. **NOW: Business Skills** is a continuation of the financial literacy program where women are trained to successfully run a profitable business. We believe that equity is a pillar of strong communities, and we know that when women are invested in, the entire community benefits. NOW and NOW: Business Skills teach women finance and business skills, but the effects of women learning those skills have far reaching impact, leading to socially cohesive communities and resilient families.

Lead builds off the momentum of our first two programs by providing a platform to amplify community-led leadership. In Lead, rural leaders enhance their leadership skills, collaborate with one another on development projects, and apply their demonstrated skills in identifying and addressing gender equity and their most urgent needs. In this program, we step back, allowing participants to prepare grant applications for funding and manage projects while working together - skills that our community partners indicated are important to them in building thriving, resilient communities. In 2019, we selected two applications and are proud to see their progress: rehabilitating a labor ward at a health clinic and providing income-based skills training for youth.





2019 RESULTS

2,521 people gained access to clean water

5,123 people gained access to toilets

2,798 people improved their food security

818 people gained access to a training center for income earning skills

125 volunteer-leaders trained in project design, implementation, and monitoring

217 NOW and NOW: Business Skills graduates achieving financial goals and enhancing their businesses

36 Lead participants trained in proposal writing and leadership skills

Building Thriving Communities

Our programs are built around the belief that thriving and resilient rural villages have the following ingredients: social cohesion, inclusive leadership, gender equity, and resiliency. Beyond the numbers, our programs work towards making these elements an ingrained part of the communities we work in.

Social Cohesion

Communities collaborate and are strengthened together

Inclusive Leadership

Community leadership is representative and transparent

Gender Equity

Communities support women and progress toward equity

Resiliency

Communities adapt and respond to external shocks

Investing Together

85%

of households contributed resources to their community development projects

In Sierra Leone, the average daily income is still below the poverty line, but **our communities prioritized a total of \$1,134 cash contributions, not including volunteer time.** This shared contribution is what makes this work a true partnership.

"[OneVillage Partners] is a completely community-led organization that allows the community to make their input on financial matters to better reach their identified goal." – Wuyata Brima, Community Action Group volunteer, Baaka



Sharing Knowledge

69%

of NOW graduates shared what they learned in the program with others

Watta Moriba of Gbeka was struggling to support her family after her husband passed away. She knew little about managing finances, until a friend of hers who went through the NOW program started sharing lessons with her. "I realized that Watta needed these lessons

even more than me," said Watta's friend. Using the NOW skills that she learned from her friend, **Watta was able to pay back debt, provide for her family, and even give out small loans to other women.** "I felt proud."



Leading Together

82%

of communities reported making shared decisions between community and traditional leadership

Traditionally in Sierra Leone, decisions about community development are placed solely in the hands of leadership at the top. Community Action allows communities to decentralize decision-making to all people in the community. Isata Kallon, a Community Action Group

volunteer from Lalehun, stated, "The support of local authorities is the key to efficient work. **The Community Action Group and the whole community need cooperation to achieve a goal.**"



Using Their Voice

42%

of speakers at OneVillage Partners community meetings were women

In a culture where women are expected to do domestic work and stay out of politics, we are seeing changes in hearts and minds. "The birth of women's leadership in Grima has strengthened our feelings of representation, unity, and investment in community

development," said Mamie Kemoh, who was elected as the Women's Youth Leader. **"Women should stop taking the back seat and serve as a strong front wheel for the development of our community."**



Preparing for the Unexpected

94%

of NOW graduates improved their financial preparedness for unexpected events

NOW empowers participants to save money for emergencies, thus creating resilience to shocks on the individual and household level. Lucy Baion of Grima completed the NOW program and learned how to financially prepare herself and her

family for unexpected events. **When her kitchen was severely damaged in a rain storm earlier in the year, her savings allowed her to rebuild her house and outdoor kitchen.**

Prioritizing Wellbeing

70%

reduced diarrhea in communities with hygiene and sanitation projects

In rural Sierra Leone, diarrheal disease is pervasive. A lack of access to toilets leads to open-defecation practices, and a lack of clean water leads to additional sanitation issues. By choosing to prioritize better sanitation facilities, communities are improving hygiene and sanitation practices, leading toward healthier communities.

“Wellbeing is more than riches, the provision of 36 adequate latrines across this community is more than providing cash money to the entire community. **Each and every one will benefit from those structures health wise.**” – Fatmata Furnyoh, Nurse, Nianahun





The Gbeka Community Gains Self-Reliance

Hawa Brima Gbondo (*pictured left*) is a 55-year-old farmer born and raised in Gbeka, a small rural village, where community members support themselves primarily through small-scale farming. Hawa says that when OneVillage Partners arrived in Gbeka in 2015, the community was divided and people rarely worked together. Village authorities ruled unfairly and engaged in corrupt practices. Villagers were resentful and wouldn't cooperate with leaders or participate in communal work. They had lost faith in their leaders and refused to contribute to local projects for fear that their money would be misused.

At the same time, Gbeka had become dependent on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to sponsor infrastructure projects. The Chieftom Speaker, Momoh Tarawally, bemoaned, "We thought that NGOs were the magicians to develop this community." One NGO built latrines with minimal input from the community, and later on, many latrines collapsed. When Hawa's latrine collapsed she didn't bother to rebuild it, even though she had the means to do so. She realized she had become reliant on NGOs to address many of her personal challenges, rather than looking to herself and her community for support. **"Seeing how I'd left my latrine in rubbles tells me that we expected more from outsiders than ourselves,"** Hawa said. Hawa wasn't alone in this mindset; the community took no ownership of projects provided simply as gifts.

Hawa believes that the first OneVillage Partners community meetings were the start of a change in Gbeka's sense of unity and commitment to spearhead local initiatives. The community selected 12 volunteers to represent the Community Action Group, who were trained in project design and management. Over the next three years, the Community Action Group oversaw the implementation of three projects for the community. Through this process, community members were inspired to make financial contributions and mobilize

construction materials for the projects. With their attitude reframed, Gbeka went to work supporting their goal of self-reliance. The Community Action Group and local leaders encouraged community members to contribute to projects. Chiefs started planning local projects in community meetings and stopped making decisions without public consultation. When the community saw positive and lasting changes in their leaders, they began cooperating with each other and sharing responsibilities. Gbeka has now rehabilitated a road connecting to a nearby village and constructed a storage space for agricultural products, all using funds and expertise from within the community. "It was challenging to get used to taking local initiative, but we have successfully rehabilitated a whole road with no NGO support," Chief Tarawally stated. Gbeka now plans projects with funding from household contributions, revenue generated from fines, and community savings groups.

This process of planning projects together as a community has changed the way Gbeka approaches development. Leaders hold regular meetings to determine budgets and report amounts collected for communal work. Meeting attendance has increased steadily over time and more people are stepping up their involvement, women in particular. "Unlike before, I now have more chances to contribute in meetings without fearing the criticism of men," community member Mamie John said.

"I am proud of what we have learned from OneVillage Partners," Hawa said. **"If villages like ours realize what they can offer to their own progress, they will not wait on NGO supplies and handouts."**

AUTHORS: Nabieu Senesie, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Officer & Emmanuel George, Community Action Coordinator

FY2019

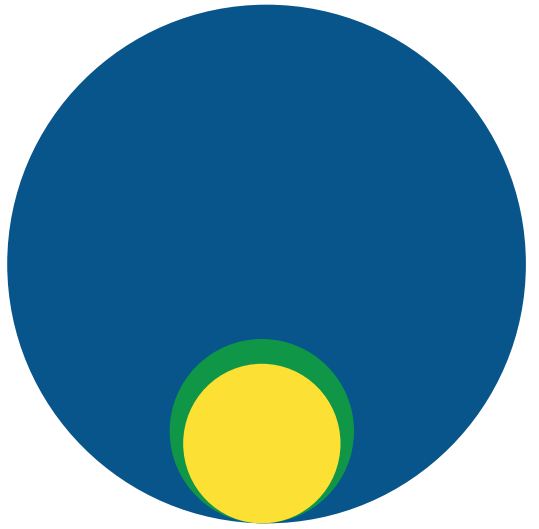
2019 Statement of Activities

Revenue	
Individual Contributions	\$627,086
Corporate Contributions	\$136,174
Grants	\$239,003
Earned Income	\$44,700
Other	\$28,684
Total Revenue	\$1,075,647

Expenses	
Personnel & Benefits	\$519,052
Contract Services	\$73,868
Supplies & Expenses	\$93,408
Facility & Equipment	\$37,144
Travel & Transportation	\$77,055
Event Expenses	\$36,705
Other	\$52,744
Total Expenses	\$889,976

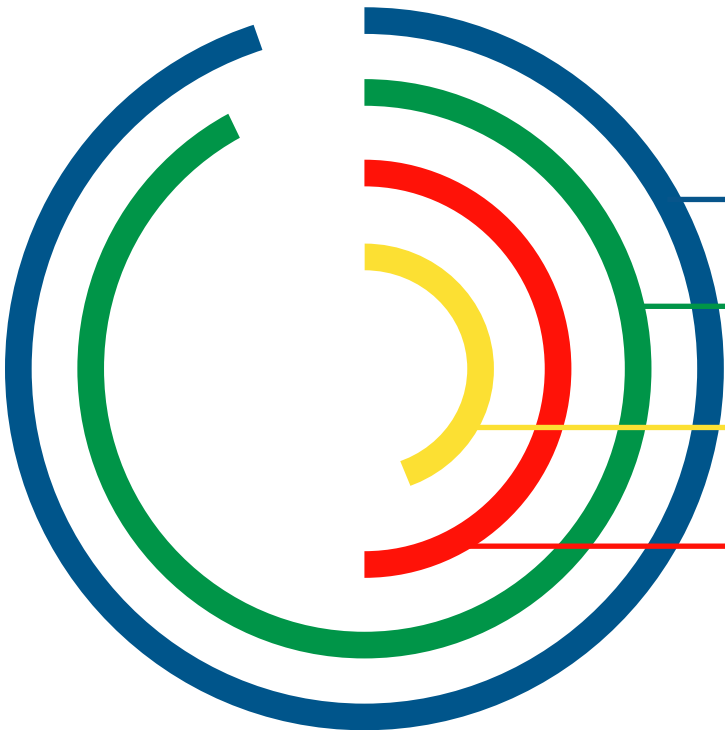
Change in Net Assets **\$185,671**

Functional Expenses



78% Programs | **12%** Fundraising | **10%** Administration

Our Team in 2019



47 full and part-time staff
92% staff working with programs in Sierra Leone
82% Sierra Leonean staff
44% staff from our partner communities
50% of leadership positions held by women



THANK YOU

We are grateful for all the people who support our organization. OneVillage Partners is made up of bold, charismatic, and generous individuals who believe that no challenge is too big. Together, we are doing mighty things in the world.



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∞ Denotes members of our Village Council

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camera to donate today!



To learn how we are responding to COVID-19, please visit www.OneVillagePartners.org

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