



oneVILLAGE
PARTNERS

Annual Report

2021

Hawa Langumba,
NOW: AgriBusiness
Participant, Grima



Hawa Idrissa,
NOW Participant,
Foindu

Dear Partners,

In 2021, we had the privilege to witness the continued strength and resiliency of Sierra Leoneans. We saw firsthand how individuals and communities continued to enhance their collective wellbeing by working together. We witnessed those who have historically been marginalized and left out of decisions impacting their lives and livelihoods rise up. We saw them effecting change to improve the lives of those around them. And we were, and are, continually in awe of them. Mary Amara's story on page 14 is just one example of how our partners face their challenges head on with fierce determination. 2021 once again demonstrated what we already know - that those with lived experience are best positioned to lead their own progress.

The movement of community-led progress is vibrant in our partner communities. Last year, our partner communities experienced a 160% increase in decision-making being shared among leaders and community members. We saw a 400% increase in women participating in public speaking, and 51% of speakers at community meetings are now women. Our pilot of a third phase of the Nurturing Opportunities for Women program has shown promising early results, including an 86% increase in reported household income after participation in the program. We know that when we invest in people, they are uniquely positioned to lead change. Our partners demonstrate this each and every day.

In 2021, the strength of our collective community - our partners in Sierra Leone, supporters here in the U.S. and globally, our global staff, and our Board of Directors - was a

force that continued to work together and gain momentum. We are excited to share that we had a record year of financial support and are now positioned to roll out our new strategy to scale our work. This means we will be able to increase our impact with current partners and broaden our circle of partners even further. We look forward to sharing our ambitious plans with you in the coming months.

As we celebrate last year's successes and reflect on lessons learned, we must also acknowledge the challenges we face to progress. The move to community-led approaches must not be a passing trend, but rather the impetus for an overhaul in development. Alongside this, as we have deepened our interrogation of decolonization, racial justice, and equity, we have uncovered that despite our progress, we must do more to push ourselves and shift power to local leaders in Sierra Leone. This is hard work and will continue to challenge us, but we are committed to continuing our work in partnership and to question our own biases in the path towards equity and liberation. More broadly, we will contribute to the industry groundswell away from top-down development and toward community-led change.

Thank you for your partnership and support last year, which made this important work possible.

Pete Janzen
BOD Chair

Jill LaLonde
Executive Director



Gouma community members vote on their priority needs

Where We Work



We partner with rural communities in Eastern Sierra Leone with populations of 500 - 2,000 people.

Our partners have limited access to major highways and struggle to meet basic infrastructure needs, including clinics, sanitation facilities and schools. We start by having communities identify their vision for prosperity and the challenges to achieving that vision. Then, OneVillage Partners trains volunteer-leaders to design solutions to meet these needs with a focus on gender equity and inclusive leadership. We invest in people, so that they can create sustainable community-led solutions to make their visions become reality.

2021 Impact

1 community governance hall

56% of community-leaders gained formal leadership

215 active volunteers-leaders

3 agriculture productivity projects

3,263 people with improved food security

30 farmers trained

24 partner communities

28,575 individuals

84% of households made monetary contributions to community development projects with OneVillage Partners

\$10,000 collective savings by NOW participants

347 NOW participants

108 latrine dropholes

3 clean water wells

69% decrease in diarrheal disease

Feima Moigua, Community Action volunteer, Bandajuma



Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership is a key piece to sustainable, community-led development that will improve wellbeing. Empowering leaders within communities creates accountability, representation, and transparency that leads to shared decision-making at the community level.



Community members from Gbeka and Maloma who participated in the Lead Program came together and sought out input from both communities. Then, they collaborated to design and implement a project that will rehabilitate the Gbeka health clinic. When their project is finished, they will have collectively improved maternal health for women in Gbeka and Maloma and the 11 surrounding communities.



“The NOW learning is not only benefiting the NOW participants, but it has also inspired the community at large in terms of development.” – Amara Nabieu, community member from Pujehun



Gender Equity

Encouraging women to use their voice and work towards gender equity is essential for families, communities, and countries to create opportunities for everyone. Creating increased access to economic opportunities for women creates a ripple effect that extends to their children, the larger community, and beyond. Our programs start the chain reaction of greater impact by empowering those women.

Social Cohesion

Through collaboration and networking with one another, communities strengthen their ability to work together to create grassroots action for change.



Jayah Massaray, Community Action volunteer from Kambama explaining their sanitation project



97% of volunteer-leaders

met with another community member outside of their engagement with OneVillage Partners to discuss continued community development



78%

of NOW: Household Finance participants shared the learning materials with someone outside the program

Our programs work together to encourage community members to collaborate, network, and partner with one another to achieve their shared goals.



Jeneba Kamara and Jeneba Konneh learn how to operate a rice milling machine in Baaka



275%

increase in households reporting the ability to effectively respond to an economic shock after completing the NOW and Community Action programs



155%

increase in NOW participants having an emergency savings fund

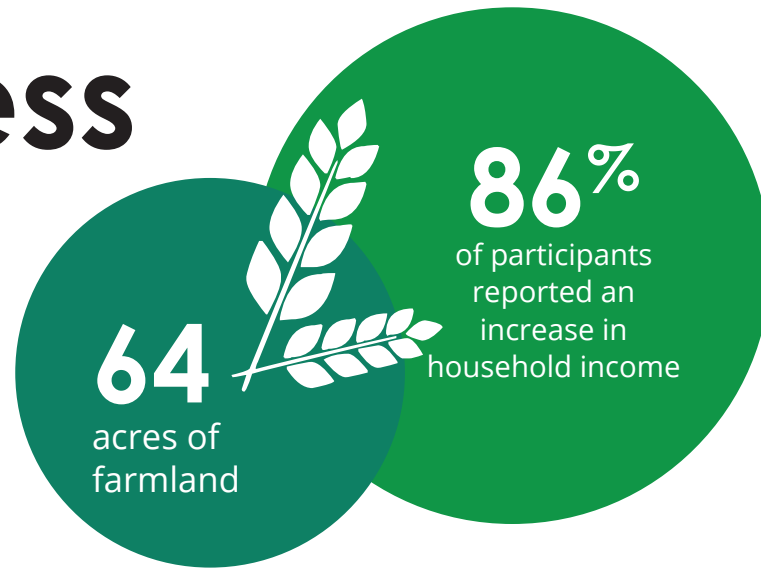
Resiliency

Safety nets that support individuals during times of illness, loss of income, or property damage are not a guarantee for many in Sierra Leone. That's why our programs help communities be better positioned to respond to future crises. Health centers, clean water, food security, and tools to help women save and make money prepare individuals to be ready when emergencies happen.

Women-Led AgriBusiness

In the rural labor force in Sierra Leone, women make up more than 60% of farm labor, but men still possess greater access to land ownership and control of production. That's why in 2021, OneVillage Partners piloted a third phase of our women's empowerment program, Nurturing Opportunities for Women: AgriBusiness. With over 120 women from six different communities, all of whom completed the first two phases of NOW, we worked with the Ministry of Agriculture in Sierra Leone to provide agricultural training, including effective farming techniques for increased crop yield and best practices for marketing and sales of produce.

These women used their financial planning and business skills and



impressively applied them to build female-led group agriculture businesses. As a result of their participation in NOW: AgriBusiness, they can now formalize their agriculture business ventures, expose themselves to larger markets, and maximize profits to increase their household incomes. The pilot is already showing positive results and strong harvests!



A Challenge Can Be an Asset

A story of most significant change about Mary Amara written by Bernadette Musu Mustapha, NOW Program Supervisor



Mary Amara is a 50-year-old widow whose husband died and left her with six children. She serves as the women's youth leader in Kigbai. After the death of her husband, Mary's husband's family grabbed all inheritance meant for her and the children, which was supposed to be their source of livelihood and education for the children. Because of this, the relationship between Mary and her late husband's family members became poor. Owing to this, she had to sell her household properties to earn income to put food on the table, take care of her children's school needs, and buy medication.

As time passed by, the money she earned from selling those household items finished. There was no money, and it was difficult to even support her children's schooling. Eventually, all six of her children dropped out of school due to a lack of resources to support their education. "One of my children got seriously sick and my husband's family abandoned us, this led to the death of my son" Mary Amara lamented.

The death of Mary's child put her into a serious depression; she was traumatized and heartbroken. As the situation got worse, she had to ask her eldest son to stop school to help provide for the family.

In 2016, OneVillage Partners worked in partnership with the Kigbai community where the Nurturing Opportunities for Women program (NOW) was introduced. The program strengthens household finances for women in the community through financial skills training. Though Mary Amara was not fortunate to be selected as a NOW participant, she was lucky to benefit from the NOW learning through her neighbor who volunteered to share what she learned. This aided Mary to understand the financial tools which in turn helped her to grow her business skills and be able to send her

children to school.

Baindu Aruna, a NOW participant, and Mary's neighbor shared the basic NOW tools: the progress chart that talks about planning, budgeting, and good communication. To put into practice all she had learned from her neighbor, Mary and her eldest son embarked on agricultural activities, planting groundnut, okra, and yam to earn income to support their family's wellbeing. They were even able to start a savings fund.

"I realized that without savings, your personal problems are always in the open", Mary stated.

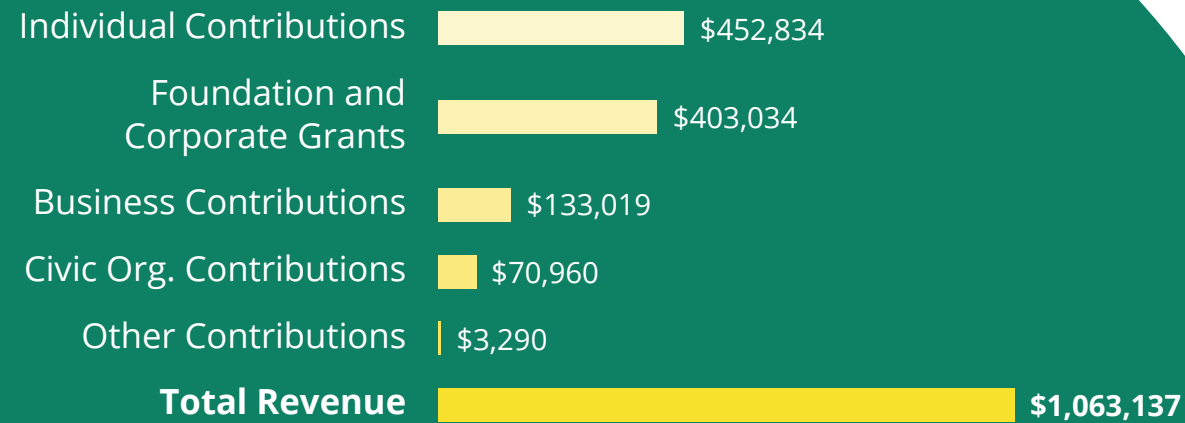
They started practicing household financial management with the resources gained from their farming activities. This allowed Mary and her family to save money and start a business doing petty trading. Out of the profit she made from her business, she was able to send her children back to school.

Out of schooling hours, Mary's children came to aid her with the farming work during weekends and holidays. She has now improved on her savings habit, and to affirm that, Mary can adequately attend to emergencies without taking loans or credit from anybody. She can now provide food in the home and respond to all her children's welfare. As a lesson learned, "I realized that without savings, your personal problems are always in the open", Mary stated.

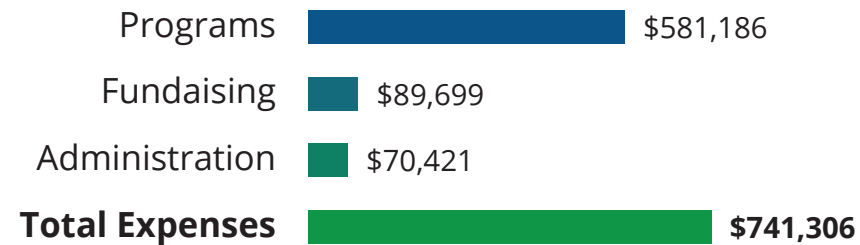
All her children have now resumed schooling and her eldest son is now at the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) level, the highest level of secondary school before graduating. At present, Mary has made reconciliation with her husband's family due to the good communication learning she acquired from her neighbor, and one of her husband's brothers is supporting her children's education. Mary now owns a business, and her respect has been restored from her husband's family. To conclude, Mary said, **"To persevere and be faithful is key in any situation. This was the tool I used for my survival."**

2021 Financials

Revenue



Expenses



Thank you to all of our partners!



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Other Partners

- Cathy Winter
- Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative
- Grow Salone
- Jawei Community Radio
- Kailahun District Council
- Ministry of Agriculture (Kailahun Agriculture Extension Officers)
- Ministry of Health (Kailahun District Health Medical Team)
- Ministry of Social Welfare
- Ministry of Water Resources

- Minnesota International NGO Network
- Movement for Community-Led Development
- Movement for Community-Led Development: Sierra Leone Chapter
- Njalahun Community Radio
- Restless Development
- Rob Cummings
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- Sierra Leone Association of NGOs
- Brio Marketing

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to their farm



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