Thus far, 2019 has been an exciting year, one that has built upon a strong foundation of collaboration and trust in our partner communities to take bold leaps forward. Our training and mobilization of local leaders has empowered 25,000 individuals to improve their quality of life through health, education, and income generation projects across 21 communities overall. By involving community members in every step of the project process, we are building knowledge and trust, not dependency, to create sustainable transformation.

In a country where maternal mortality is the highest in the world, and where more than 60% of the population lives on less than $1.25/day, there are urgent needs that remain unmet. These needs, coupled with our success to date, have mobilized us and our partner communities to engage in regional-level work to achieve even greater results. In July, we began piloting the Lead Program, which creates a platform for communities to collaborate on regional challenges and develop leadership skills to generate long-lasting change. We plan to begin our first cross-village projects before the end of the year.

Your strong and unwavering support is the reason that OneVillage Partners is able to successfully build thriving, connected, and resilient communities. Thank you for your commitment to OneVillage Partners and to the people of Sierra Leone.

With gratitude,

Jill LaLonde
COMMUNITY ACTION

Our Community Action Program trains volunteer leaders as change agents to mobilize their communities to identify, design, and implement projects to improve their collective well-being. See our work in action as you follow the development of Pejewa with the help of Amara and other local volunteers:

Amara Kposowa is a father, husband, pastor, and hardworking Community Action Group volunteer for his community of Pejewa. He is a farmer, like most families in his community, and supports his family by cultivating coffee, cocoa, and palm tree oil.

“SERVING THE COMMUNITY MAKES ME HAPPY. IF WE WORK TOGETHER, EVERYBODY WINS.”
Amara Kposowa

Pejewa, a small village of 1,400 people, first partnered with OneVillage Partners in 2016. With the help of Amara and other local volunteers, Pejewa has tackled challenges of health, agricultural productivity, and food security.
Before partnering with OneVillage Partners, Pejewa suffered from rampant diarrheal diseases and constant food shortages. According to the World Health Organization, diarrhea is the second leading cause of death of children younger than five in Africa, and 88% of these deaths are due to unsafe water, poor sanitation, and insufficient hygiene. “Open-defecation was rampant in the community, because there weren’t enough toilets or latrines. People were sick constantly with diarrhea,” states Amara Kposowa.

In 2016, Pejewa identified the immediate goal of building latrines to address the problem of open-defecation in the community. Pejewa added 93 toilets, establishing access to latrines for the entire community, which improved sanitary standards across the village. After the latrines were completed, Pejewa saw an 89% decrease in diarrheal disease. The latrine project resulted in a healthier community.

Building on their momentum from the latrine project, Pejewa focused their second project on improving food security. Though most households were engaged in farming as a primary source of income and food, the community lacked an understanding of a farming calendar and techniques for planting. With support from Amara and other volunteers, Pejewa built a dry floor and storage facility to prepare and protect their crops, trained local farmers on effective farming methods and encouraged them to share their new knowledge. They established a seed bank that allows farmers to access seeds and repay after the harvest.

Today, Pejewa is addressing their overall livelihood and productivity by installing a rice mill. The machine will shorten rice production time and improve the quality of seeds for future use. Three years into their partnership with OneVillage Partners, Amara and other volunteers continue to successfully mobilize their community to improve their collective well-being.

“[WE HAVE LEARNED] TO DO PROJECTS ON OUR OWN, USING OUR OWN RESOURCES, AND UNITING AS A PROUD COMMUNITY. WE HAVE DIGNITY.”
– Junior Makieu, Pejewa volunteer

Percentage of People Reporting Diarrhea

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<th>BEFORE LATRINES</th>
<th>AFTER LATRINES</th>
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<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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89% Reduction in Diarrheal Disease
NURTURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) is an entirely picture-based curriculum that teaches participants basic financial and business principles, planning, and decision-making, so they can manage finances throughout the year and reach their goals. In 2018, NOW: Business Skills was piloted as a continuation of the NOW financial literacy programming focusing on business development skills to enhance women’s financial empowerment.

Baindu Mohammed is a mother, wife, and business woman in her community of Grima. Baindu participated in the NOW Program and learned how to save enough money to pay for her children’s education. In 2018, Baindu participated in the NOW: Business Skills Program pilot. Follow along as we check in one year later!

“I HAVE AN INCOME AND CAN NOW PROVIDE FOR MY CHILDREN.”
Baindu Mohammed

In July 2019, 112 participants across four communities graduated from the NOW Programs. These women are leaders in their households and communities.
The NOW program uses picture-based tools to cater to illiterate women with little education. Above, NOW Coordinator Bernadette is using an elastic band to teach participants why it is important to have a goal that is just the right size. If a goal is too big, you may be stretched too tight. Too small, and you may not be challenged or grow from it.

Like many NOW participants, Baindu set and reached her goal of sending her children to school after graduating from the NOW Program. “NOW was very beneficial to me and my family. I wanted to do NOW: Business Skills so I could continue learning and better my business skills,” says Baindu.

After applying her learning from NOW: Business Skills to her family business of selling palm oil and other goods, Baindu decided to stretch her goals and open a cookery, a place where people can buy pre-cooked meals. Before the program, if Baindu wanted to sell goods, she would often sell something that others were already selling in the community and would not investigate if those goods were actually profitable. In NOW: Business Skills, participants learn how to do a market survey by assessing demand, competition, potential earnings, and how much money to invest. Baindu conducted a market survey in Grima before opening her cookery to ensure her new business would be profitable. One year later, Baindu is successfully managing the earnings from her cookery and balancing personal savings and investments back into her business.

Baindu says, “Before I started NOW II, I didn’t have a steady income. I wanted to start a business but didn’t know where to start. Now, I have my own business selling cooked rice to people in the community. I have so many customers! And most importantly, I have an income, and can now provide for my children.”

NOW Participant Primary Goals:

- 60% choose to send their children to school
- 30% choose to improve their business

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<th>Primary Goals</th>
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<td>60% choose to send their children to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>30% choose to improve their business</td>
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<tr>
<td>10% choose to improve their health</td>
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