



Dear Hanne, Federation Presidents and Soroptimists,

Thank you once again for your extraordinary efforts in supporting our partnership in Sierra Leone, Project Sierra: A Family And A Future. Since the launch of your Quadrennial Project in August 2007, you have raised over £784,000 towards a target of £1 million. With only 6 months to go, I have no doubt that you will exceed your target, given what I have seen of your amazing enthusiasm and commitment so far.

Of course what really matters is that the lives of literally hundreds of children and young women are being transformed as a direct result of your hard work. The young mothers we work with have all suffered abuse of one form or another. Many of them have had babies and suffered further stigma from family or community members resulting in their isolation or exclusion from the community. The majority of them are forced to live on the street, often with their babies. Project Sierra offers these young people skills training or access to schooling along with life skills, counselling, small business support, parenting skills and recreation in a safe atmosphere, while mediating with their families and communities for them to return home. We also work with key stakeholders in the community to take more responsibility for the welfare of these young people.

This year around 350 young women will receive direct support of this nature. At the same time we are working with many vulnerable families and single mothers in the community, who would have been at risk of breaking up and abandoning their children without your support.

I'm sure you would be interested to know that the Project Sierra is having a significant long term impact on society in Sierra Leone through our partnerships with:

- Community leaders - influencing changes in attitudes and behaviour towards young mothers and other vulnerable children
- Local representatives of the Ministry of Social Welfare - supporting the training of community workers and helping to enforce child protection laws
- Marie Stopes clinics - offering family planning and counselling services
- Local police - supporting the project through a change in attitudes, ensuring that young mothers are protected and free from further abuse
- Local businesses - offering work placement opportunities

The crucial thing you are giving these young people, most of whom have faced hardship and deprivation beyond our imagination, is the chance to regain their self respect. Thank you so much for your support. Please do all you can to give a final push for Project Sierra, so that we can smash right through the £1 million target!

With all good wishes.

Rick Foulsham, CMG
Chief Executive

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