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## Empowering Women through Sustainable Agriculture and Microcredit Strategies

### A Story of Transformation



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Kadiatu is a mother of five children and a household-goods trader and farmer from Bendukoro village, Koinadugu District, northern Sierra Leone. She has been a beneficiary of the local Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security (SAFS) and Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) projects supported by World Renew and implemented by its partner, Christian Extension Services (CES). Kadiatu testifies that the SAFS and VSLA projects have helped to accomplish remarkable things that she and her family will never forget.

Before she participated in the SAFS and VSLA projects, Kadiatu's income and that of her husband was so low that they had difficulty sending their children to school because they could not pay all of the school fees. The family could equally not afford two meals per day, and the situation always grew worse during the hunger season in July and August, when her husband had to go extra lengths to make charcoal for sale, despite the fire hazard involved. That was the only way they knew how to survive.

Kadiatu took loans from the VSLA group and bought assorted items for her household-goods trade such as batteries, soap, biscuits, books, pens and pencils, drinks, breads, onions, pepper, salt, seasoning, and so on. She sold all these things and later paid back the loan with interest. After the first loan cycle with the VSLA, she was able to take out a larger sum, equivalent to \$160 (USD), and went to Kabala, the district headquarters town, to buy additional assorted goods. She also made a large shelf to replace the small tray she had used to sell her items on. She now sells tea and bread in the community as well.



This is a sign that her trade has been growing and the patronage is increasing.

As a SAFS beneficiary, Kadiatu used some of her loan money to pay labor costs for her Inland Valley Swamp Farming (IVF) crop of rice. She thanks God that with the VSLA funds invested in her rice farm, she was able to harvest 30 bushels.

Her vision did not end there. Kadiatu also embarked on raising small livestock. Now she has four female and three male goats, and her husband, Sheku Sheriff, takes care of these goats.

Kadiatu said that with the SAFS and VSLA project, her income and that of their family is now more stable and all her children are going to school. The eldest, Feremusu Sheriff, is in senior secondary school, class four, and the fifth child is in junior secondary school, class three.

Kadiatu and her family are grateful to CES and donor partner World Renew for the SAFS and VSLA projects. The training and opportunities to make improvements have changed the life of her family members and have allowed her to take care of some necessary household expenses while her husband covers other expenses.

Kadiatu has also been elected as VSLA chair and treasurer, and this shows that respect for her by family and community members at large has increased, she said.



# Prayer Requests for Sierra Leone

- Thank God for the successful completion of the Post-Ebola Orphan Rehabilitation project undertaken in Nieni Chiefdom. Pray that the caregivers and mentors will continue to support the children for a while until the children are able to take care of themselves.
- Continue to pray for the new CRC Church in Yirafilaya Badela. Thank God for the evangelist who is leading the growing young church there. The community donated a large plot of land, and the CRC-SL is supporting the construction of a church building as the community provides labor for the work to be done. Pray that the construction work goes well. Already some adobe bricks have been molded.
- Thank God for the installation of two rice mills (located at Kalkoya and Diang Sokurella 2) and the construction of two drying floors (at Yirafilaya Badela and Bendukoro). A visit to the sites has shown us how the projects are being put to good use, and the appreciation of the community, especially that of the women who are involved, knows no bounds.
- Praise God for the women's SAFS group, which has proved to be very effective in food security. Pray that none of the participants will waste the surplus income realized from the farm as a result of this support.
- Pray that the CES board will continue to provide the necessary support and oversight for staff and programs. Pray also that the staff will maintain the drive toward mobilizing communities for self-action.
- Sierra Leone is going through one of its worst economic crises in recent times. Pray that the government will help to ease the burden of the poor, which was already at its lowest point after the Ebola crisis.
- Pray that CES staff will continue to honor God in all that they do, both in the office and on the field. May they be examples to the communities they support and the many groups they facilitate.