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## Spiritual Transformation in Yirafilila Badela

### A Story of Transformation



by Andrew Gwaivangmin  
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The targeted communities, CES staff, and the CES Board appreciate World Renew for their relentless efforts to ensure that CES helps some of the most vulnerable rural communities in Koinadugu district; especially Yirafilila Badela. This endeavor has led to the people in the community requesting a church be built in their village, even though most of them are either Muslim or traditional worshippers. They consider themselves formerly despised and abandoned by the government and other NGOs. They believe that only CES came to their rescue. Today they see their community flourishing and many people are now willing to come settle in the community. Many are building bigger houses due to increased income. They have asked for a church in their community as they see church establishment synonymous with growth and progress. This request for a church was finally answered by the Christian Reformed Church of Sierra Leone after some initial delay.

From Friday May 13 to Sunday May 15 (Pentecost day) the CRC-SL team went to the village of Yirafilila Badela for evangelistic outreach. It was a great moment of joy for the team from Kabala to see the people coming to confess Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and savior. Yirafilila Badela is a community that CES has worked with for years to improve the lives of the people. CES has built the capacity of the leaders



in the community by assisting them with the construction of a gravity water system, a four classroom block, a grain storehouse, and a rice milling machine. This is in addition to the sustainable agriculture program recently introduced with 30 female beneficiaries. These interventions by CES, as far as the community is concerned, clearly shows true divine love from the organization. As a result they requested a church be built in the community and want to know the God of the people that have helped them so very much. This evangelistic outreach was a direct response to the yearnings of the community. The outreach, which lasted for two nights, resulted in 15 families accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The first church service was held on Pentecost Sunday, May 15. A young man of the CRC Kabala Church, Mr. Bilalie Mansaray was assigned as the local evangelist for the Yirafilila Badela church by the leadership of CRC-SL. The evangelistic outreach to the community was led and facilitated by Rev. Istifanus Bahago, the CRC-SL national consultant.

### Praise and Petition

- Thank God for the ongoing Ebola Orphan Relief project undertaken in Nieni Chiefdom. Pray that caregivers and mentors will be committed to supporting and helping these children have a better life.
- Praise God for the successful evaluation of CES Village Savings and Loans (VSL) project. Thank God for the successes recorded and the fact that the women are experiencing improved well-being in just one year.
- Praise God for the new CRC Church in Yirafilila Badela. Pray for the caretaker evangelist, Bilalie Mansaray, as he continues to provide needed support in the new church.
- Praise God for Rev. M.B. Jalloh, the now retired senior pastor of CRC Kabala. Pray that he enjoys his years of retirement from active service. Continue to pray for God to provide a new pastor for the congregation.

- Praise God for the new bike CES received. CES recently received funding to purchase a new power bike for one of the field staff. This meets a crucial need in terms of effective field supervision. We are most grateful to our donors for meeting this need.
- New members were recently appointed to the CES board including representatives from the CRC-SL church leadership. Pray that this will help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the board as it steers the organization in the years ahead.
- Praise God for the successful holding of the CRC-SL General Church Council (Synod) held in June. During this time new leaders were elected to lead the church in the next year. Pray that the new leaders will live up to their responsibilities and meet the challenges ahead as they grow the church into new territories.

- Pray for the newly elected President of the CRC-SL, Rev. Moses Musa Jawara. Rev. Jawara is also the Pastor of the Wellington Church in Freetown, which he founded a few years ago and is a fast growing church. Pray that the Lord will give him discernment as he leads the church at this very demanding time.
- Pray for the people of Kabala who witnessed a clash between the Kabala Police and the youth in town on August 16, resulting in some losing their lives and property. Although normalcy has returned, pray that government and law enforcement will not use excessive force and show of power but instead more dialogue as they interact with the youth now and in the future.
- Praise God our eldest daughter Kyimya has graduated from university. We are pleased as a family that she is finally done with undergraduate study.

# Ebola Orphan Children Response

## A Story of Transformation

*This woman lost 13 people in her family, including the parents of these kids she now takes care of.*

### Introduction

In early October 2014 the southwestern town of Fankoya, in the Koinadugu District in the Nieni Chiefdom, experienced its first Ebola outbreak, marking the end of its reign as the only Ebola free District in Sierra Leone. Sixteen other communities have been affected by Ebola bringing the total to 17 communities.

The devastating impact of the Ebola crisis showed that 355 children (some more than 18 years of age) were orphaned by the Ebola virus in the Nieni Chiefdom.

The project covered four villages in Nieni Chiefdom, including Kumala, Joria, Kandaya and Fankoya. The project was implemented between July and November 2015. It provided support to 105 Ebola orphans and their households, by providing them with staple food (rice), learning materials, and warm clothing to meet their immediate food, health, and learning needs. The households that were caring for these orphans have been struggling to provide for the children and therefore desperately need help.

Most of these orphaned children (also called Ebola Orphans) depended wholly on their extended family members sharing their limited food and other resources. Food became a key issue that needed to be addressed. Food scarcity was fueled by restriction in movement. The drop in businesses and bad roads make it difficult for food to be transported within the Chiefdom.

There were a total of 355 identified Ebola Orphans, but only 105 (57 girls and 48 boys) were selected from four communities. There were 35 deceased parents (24 female and 11 male) and 36 guardians and extended family members taking care of the orphans.

The goal of the project was to provide stable food, warm clothing, and learning materials to at least 95% of the orphans from the four villages to increase their chances of being supported by their extended family in the Chiefdom.

### The Activities Carried Out

Major activities carried out during this time:

- Re-verification of Ebola orphans in Nieni chiefdom
- Orientation meetings with key stakeholders in the chiefdom: opinion leaders, local Ebola task-force team members and responsible members hosting the orphan children in communities.
- Procurement and distribution of food, and clothing to the Orphans
- Media Coverage on the activities carried out
- Monitoring and evaluation of the project
- Distribution of learning materials to orphan children in schools in Kumala

There was already an established list of Ebola orphans compiled by the Ebola Task Force Team and the District Medical Team Repre-

sentatives in Chiefdom. This made it easy to select those who would be eligible for support by the project in the four villages of Kumala, Joria, Kandaya and Fankoya.

Most of the orphans found compassionate relatives but their households are too large to provide food, clothing, and sleeping accommodations.

Some of the orphans were accepted by relatives who have little knowledge of sanitation and hygiene practices or are too poor, but have a heart to support the children at this time.

The burden taken by the relatives as caregivers has some negative consequences for their own children too. Food will now be limited as it is shared by more dependents. The plan is to ensure that food, clothing, and school materials are included in the next intervention.

### Project Impact on Individuals and Community

Impact 1: The burden of care and support was reduced for the caregivers of these orphans during what is already a dire food situation in the Chiefdom.

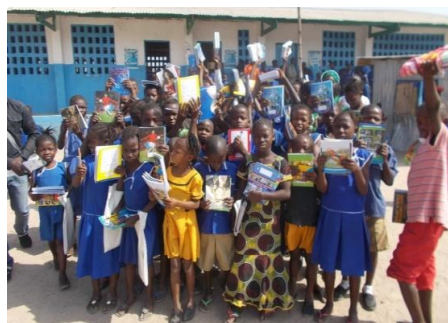
Impact 2: Three months of staple food and condiments was available for the identified 105 Ebola orphans. **Hope was restored.** One of the great challenges facing the nation is the aftermath of the Ebola virus. Even though the scourge is completely gone, nevertheless there are communities that were badly hit by the virus across the country. Both survivors and orphans are faced with the challenge of reintegrating into the community and into their families.

Impact 3: CES visited Yoria, Kumala and other villages within Koinadugu District and distributed relief materials to orphans and caregivers of those who lost both parents to the virus. It was a sad sight to see these orphans queue up to receive the relief provided. One woman (above) cried bitterly during the food distribution as she remembered her relatives who died as a result of the virus and she was left with orphans to care for. She has now become a caregiver.



### Lessons Learned

1. Donors (WR) and implementing partners (CES) were highly appreciated by the Chiefdom authorities and caregivers for their time, energy, commitment, and care. This was made possible with the strategy CES used to get community participation during the implementation of the project.
2. CES provided timely help and were the first to supply food specifically for the orphans. This reduced the negative impact of the Ebola outbreak on the orphans and community.
3. Agricultural work was delayed during the Ebola period and led to poor harvests. This has exacerbated what is already a dire food situation in these villages.
4. During the monitoring visits, it was clear that female caregivers took better care of the orphans than male caregivers in terms of their physical appearances (hair condition, condition of clothes they have on, and the neatness of where they sleep).
5. Communities are very willing to share the little they have with relatives in times of disaster. This made it quite easy for the children to find a place to stay and for the project to support parents that were willing to help these children.
6. This project intervention is opening people up to questions about their faith. They now see the Christian faith as showing God's love unconditionally.



*Distributing Learning Materials to Pupils of Missionary Church of Africa (MCA) Primary School (left) and Stephen Gberekoro Memorial Secondary School (right), Kumala.*