

SERVING SIERRA LEONE

Through Operation Classroom West and other programs.

November, 2016

REBEL WAR, EBOLA, AND NOW INFLATION

SOME ECONOMIC SPECULATION

It is good that the people of Sierra Leone are so resilient and always hopeful. After being so close to recovering from the rebel war, Ebola struck. Now while recovering from the Ebola crisis, inflation is close to being rampant.

A little more than a year ago the exchange rate was Le5,000 per dollar. Today the exchange rate is Le7,500 per dollar, a 50% increase.

The government can no longer afford to subsidize the cost of fuel. Increased fuel costs means it will be more expensive to get food products to market and travel will be reduced.

Reports indicate that Sierra Leone imports \$100 million of rice. The increased exchange rate alone means the cost of imported rice, the staple food of Sierra Leone, will increase dramatically, as will all imported products.

Much of the Sierra Leone recovery from the Rebel War was based on the fast development of iron ore mining. The Ebola crisis shut down production. During Ebola the demand for iron ore fell rapidly and the price dropped. The iron ore mines have not re-opened.

The solution to these problems will be disruptive. The IMF, donor nations, The World Bank, will step in and insist on devaluation, perhaps the issuance of new currency, stricter laws, and of course the elimination of corruption. The government may need to impose economic sanctions on the people.

Some reports indicate that government employees and teachers are not paid regularly. Politicians are blaming each other and the youth and young adults are restless. The short term future is not promising.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

A lesson was learned long ago that not all problems can be solved at once. Serving Sierra Leone will continue to concentrate on ordinary people in the small community of Kabala, one of the poorest areas in Sierra Leone, and selected other areas. Ordinary people are the most affected by inflation. We will continue to *feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and help the homeless.*

Serving Sierra Leone will of course react to short term and emergency needs. For the long term we will emphasize education at Heritage UMC High School and the Kabala School for the Blind. The students will gain the knowledge to help themselves and their country.

SEED will continue to provide health care, both preventive and curative, and provide community development. Healthy individuals study better and work better.

SEED and Serving Sierra Leone are cooperating with Salone Rising.

They are promoting and assisting entrepreneurs (thus creating jobs), and seeking to create a Children's Village for the orphans of Ebola.

NEEDS

Heritage teachers are not being paid. Only \$400 a month will provide a subsistence salary for nine teachers.

The classroom floors need to be refinished as the concrete surface is flaking off. **50 new double desks**, at \$40 each, are needed for the three new classrooms.

The School for the Blind is always in need of funds to pay for food for the 50 or 60 students. The government is responsible for the costs at the School but funds come very late or not at all.

The School for the Blind and Heritage both need school supplies. Shipments of supplies to Sierra Leone are made regularly. School and Medical supplies can be donated, or funds can be donated to purchase those supplies.

Please **DONATE** to Serving Sierra Leone and mail your donation to Serving Sierra Leone, c/o Hope and Les Law, 25271 Westridge Road, Golden, CO 80403. Credit card donations can be accepted by going to hope4salone.org and clicking on the Donate Button

Consider donating as a **Christmas gift** in honor of someone "who has everything". Your honoree will be notified of your gift.



SERVING SIERRA LEONE is an independent 501 (c) (3) not for profit organization that collects and distributes funds for **The United Methodist Church Operation Classroom projects** and other programs in Sierra Leone that are in need. Hope and Les Law act as Western Area Coordinators and can be reached at hopeles2@gmail.com or 303 642 3693