



S · M · O · A · T
ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

20 November 2019

Dear SMOAT supporter

We will be launching our Christmas Appeal at the 10am service at St. Mark's on Sunday 24 November.

This year we are supporting two exciting projects from organisations new to us. Rest assured, we have been thorough in our research into both organisations and have communicated with them to ensure that the projects we are putting forward are well structured and worthy of your consideration. The first is a Women's Project supporting the education of young women and girls by EducAid in Sierra Leone. The second project is from Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Services, delivering essential medical care to remote villages in the Simien Mountains in Ethiopia.

Erin Northey, the CEO at EducAid, will be speaking at our Christmas Appeal on Sunday 24 November.

EducAid - The Women's Project

The Women's Project encourages and supports young women and girls to return to education. It is offered at a critical time as the President of Sierra Leone has recently committed to free education for 1.5 million primary and secondary school children. However, gender inequality is deeply engrained in tradition and cultural practices: Sierra Leone has one of the highest prevalence rates for female genital mutilation in West Africa and 18% of girls are married by the age of 15, and 44% by the age of 18. This means that women and girls are much less likely to be able to benefit from the new opportunity.

This programme allows women and girls who might struggle to capitalise on the mainstream education to get the support they need to cope effectively and reintegrate into mainstream schools. It is specifically aimed at girls and young women who, for various reasons, have never been to school or have left school.



A young girl being given the chance of an education



Lumley School, Freetown, Sierra Leone

The programme is self-paced and supports the students to work at the appropriate level for themselves, with constant attention being paid to improving their self-esteem. This is critical for their continued development and resilience enabling them to re-enter mainstream classrooms and beyond. To this end, the amount of support each woman receives varies from between three months and 18 months, according to how much time they need to re-enter mainstream education.

We will be supporting refurbishment projects to facilitate classroom and boarding provision. The initial priority is Lumley School in Freetown. The space is both a boarding facility and a classroom. Amongst other young women, this school will be taking women from the Freedom from Fistula programme (which we supported earlier this year through the Jazz evening), helping them back into mainstream education. The plan for 2019/20 is to take twenty young women into the school (ten from the Freedom from Fistula programme), with the long-term plan being to support some 150 women back into mainstream education over the next three years, and many more into the future.

EducAid who run this programme is a UK-registered charity, established in 1995 to restore and strengthen education during and in the aftermath of Sierra Leone's devastating civil war.

Simeon Mountains Project – Blood Testing for antenatal care and patient diagnosis

The aim of the Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Services (SMMMS) is to deliver essential medical care at no cost to remote villages in the Simien Mountains. Although there are two roads to the west and south of this area, the interior is still only accessible by foot or trusty mule. This means that it can be a two day round trip to a clinic, a journey which many people cannot undertake. Consequently, many treatable conditions can become life-threatening.

Currently, there is virtually no laboratory capability at local health facilities to test blood for haemoglobin, do a white blood cell count or record blood sugar levels for antenatal patients and the diagnosis of infections and disease. We have been asked to support the purchase of at least one HemoCue 201+. Essentially, this is a hand-held device for testing blood samples. The goal of SMMMS is to provide one device for their clinic, seven devices for each of the seven government health centres they support with midwives, as well as their five mobile nurses. The midwives and nurses will sign for their devices and be accountable for them. The people served by these devices will total nearly 350,000 in an area larger than Yorkshire, which gives you an indication of the area covered by just five nurses and seven midwives. By operating a mobile medical service directly into the remote villages, it is hoped to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of the people of the Simien Mountains.



The only way to reach the remote villages

Our projects this year are quite different but each one is essential for marginalised and remote groups of people, giving them the chance of an education or to receive essential medical care, both things that we take for granted. These projects will give these people the chance to make something of their lives. Education empowers and good healthcare is essential to enable people to work and provide for their families. We hope you will be able to support us.

On behalf of the SMOAT Committee, I wish you a joyous and peaceful Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

Barbara Perkins (Chair)

SMOAT Christmas Appeal 2019

I enclose a gift of £ towards SMOAT's work in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia.

Title First Name or initials Surname

Cheques, payable to **SMOAT** should be sent to: SMOAT Treasurer, 12 Ifield Close, Redhill, RH1 6SW

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