

Gland, April 24th, 2018

Dear Sponsors and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we send you the Newsletter for Quarter 1, 2018 both by email and printed by normal mail so that you can easier share it with family and friends.

We would like to make a special thanks to the many donors who replied to our appeal for help in the beginning of the year. Thanks to you, we were able to raise more than CHF 150'000 during the quarter and the most acute crises is behind us. Nevertheless, as you can see from the statistics in the newsletter, due to a continued lack of financial resources, we are only using about 25% of the hospital's capacity with numerous patients having to be turned away.

We remain optimistic that little by little we shall be able to improve the financial situation and provide even more help and ASSL has set itself the target to raise CHF 100'000 in the second quarter. We are particularly grateful that one donor has already committed for CHF 25'000 and we are optimistic that the readers of this newsletter shall be encouraged by the progress made at the hospital and help us to fill the gap.

Do not hesitate to consult our website: www.assl-ch.org.

Once more, many thanks for your truly outstanding contributions, small and big, during the last quarter and wishing you and your families happiness and good health in the coming months,

The ASSL Committee

Inspector of Schools

Magbenteh Community Boarding School reopened for the second term of the 2017/2018 academic year on 8th January 2018. The Inspector of Schools from the Ministry of Education visited and reported afterwards that we were top out of 160 schools in the area for student and staff attendance.



Therapeutic Feeding Centre



Malnutrition rates in Sierra Leone are among some of the highest in the world. According to the World Health Organisation, 45% of child deaths are related to malnutrition.

Magbenteh Community Hospital established a Stabilization Centre in 2012 which served the communities of Bombali District until the Ebola epidemic in 2014 which currently remains closed, until funding is secured. Thanks to the donations of cooking items and special nutrition food for malnourishment offered by the district nutritionist, we are now able to plan for a closer reopening.

Female Ward



The Female Ward at Magbenteh Community Hospital is in urgent need of refurbishment with a recent collapse of the cyclotex ceiling as a result of termites.

Due to this incident we have to temporarily relocate current patients, for safety and hygiene reasons.

Arms around Sierra Leone

Height additional upper-limb amputee patients were measured and cast for their prosthetics at the Regional Hospital Physiotherapy Department, funded by Arms Around Sierra Leone. The aim of the project is to improve the quality of life of all those who have become amputees for different reasons.



In the coming weeks the patients will return to the Regional Hospital for the fitting of their new prosthetics. Following this, they will receive physiotherapy at Magbenteh Community Hospital as part of the rehabilitation process.

Helfende Hände



The Swiss-Sierra Leone Development Foundation recently welcomed friends from the German organisation, Helfende Hände.

During their time in Makeni, a ceremony was held for the handing over of three new classrooms funded by Helfende Hände, with the support of SSLDF. It was a wonderful occasion with speeches from the Head Boy and Head Girl, alongside a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Before leaving, Helfende Hände presented a very generous donation to SSLDF for drugs and medical supplies at Magbenteh Community Hospital. We are extremely grateful for the long-standing support and commitment of Helfende Hände to SSLDF's work.

Increase in Child Malnutrition

Since the beginning of March, the Under-Fives clinic at Magbenteh Community Hospital has received 4 cases of acute and chronic malnutrition.

One of these admissions includes a 4-year-old boy called Hassan weighing just 6kg. His parents passed away 2 years ago, leaving his grandmother to care for him and his 4 siblings. Hassan was tested positive for both HIV and TB. Unable to walk alone, suffering from severe anemia, he was in a critical condition.



The nurses were able to provide Hassan with milk for 6 days (inserted through a tube as he was unable to eat for himself). He then received plumpy nut (food specially adapted to treat malnutrition) for 4 days. On day 9 Hassan started asking his grandmother for rice, which was a good sign.

The rise of malnourished children arriving Magbenteh Community Hospital over the past few weeks is extremely worrying, especially in regards to the side effects of malaria and anemia. There is an evident need to reopen the centre officially as soon as possible, but funding must be secured first to purchase food supplements and drugs.

Malaria Endemic

One of our medical team's biggest challenges is the fight against Sierra Leone's most common infectious disease and one of its most serious public health problems: malaria. According to the World Malaria Report, the disease is endemic in Africa and referred to as 'the sickness of poverty', despite being both treatable and preventable. Children under the age of 5 are particularly susceptible to infection, commonly developing severe anaemia, respiratory distress or cerebral malaria.



Magbenteh Community Hospital receives an average of 8,000 child in and out patients per year.

Of this figure, 45% are diagnosed with malaria. There is a distinct relationship between poverty and malaria. The communities which Magbenteh Community Hospital serve are particularly deprived with a lack of access to clean water and therefore sanitation. Many communities reside close to swamp areas or rivers. The lack of ventilation in houses and humid temperatures result in perfect mosquito breeding environments, thus promoting the spread of the disease.

School Feeding Programme

The Swiss-Sierra Leone Development Foundation received a visit from the Executive Director, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Aurora Foundation, an NGO supporting cultural and social projects in both Iceland and Sierra Leone.

Subsequent to their visit, the Aurora Foundation have agreed to partner with SSLDF in the area of a feeding programme at Magbenteh Community Boarding School.



This new and exciting partnership will enable SSLDF to provide 2 nutritious meals 3 days per week, during the next 6 months. The additional 2 days of feeding will be supported by a Swiss Association (ASSEDA) and a German Association (Helfende Hände).



A specific focus on the nutritional aspect has been emphasized in regard to the quality of ingredients used by our cooks, as well as ensuring vitamins, fat, calcium and protein in particular are incorporated into the diet.

This is particularly important as many of the children attending the school are malnourished, only previously eating once per day and executing domestic work both prior and after school. Each child has the responsibility of washing their bowl and cutlery prior and after eating, creating a sense of self-worth and accountability.

Sierra Leone Elections

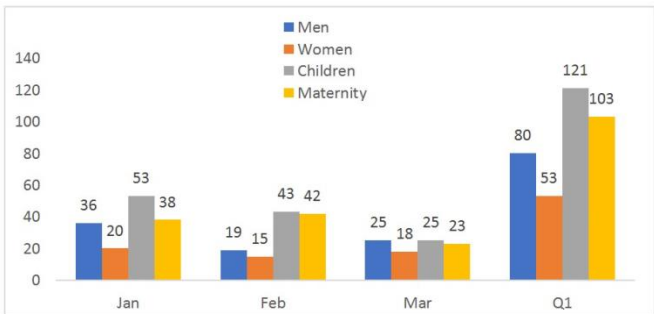
On March 7, 2018 the country held Presidential and General Elections. Sierra Leone has a population of 6.9 million people, with just under 3 million votes. Ballot boxes at polling stations were counted manually twice, with results sent to the National Electoral Committee in Freetown and not announced until 13th March 2018. No single party won the 55% majority required to win the Presidential Election, therefore a 'run-off' or 're-election' was declared for 27th March 2018. This has now been postponed until 31st March 2018.



The country is currently at a 'standstill' with schools and business closed, lack of imports by suppliers; the Sierra Leonean economy is suffering, severely impacting the health and education sectors especially. In a nation with continuous resilience in the face of constant challenges we pray for change, hope and most importantly peace.

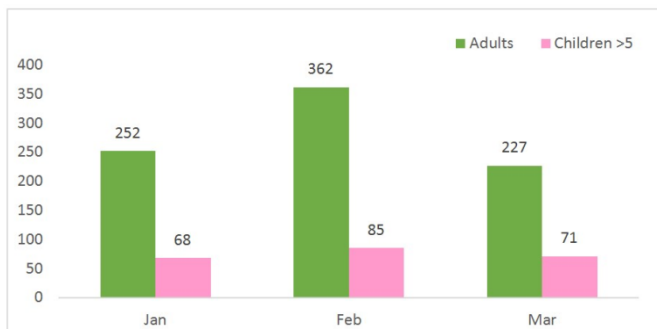
The Quarter in numbers

Hospitalisations



Due to lack of financial resources, as the quarter progressed, the hospital was forced to admit an ever decreasing number of patients. With 100 beds over four weeks and an average stay of half a week, the monthly capacity would be 800 patients and the quarterly capacity 2'400 patients. Thus, with 574 patients in the quarter, only about 25% of the hospital's capacity was used.

Ambulatory



The ambulatory intake suffered even more from the lack of financial resources. Based on historical records, we could easily have taken ten times as many patients had we had sufficient funds available.

The Family Planning Clinic

After the Ebola outbreak and with the support of two private donors, the Family Planning clinic will reopen at Magbenteh Community Hospital, providing free contraception to women in Bombali District.



By re-establishing the Family Planning clinic at Magbenteh Community Hospital, our staff will be able to sensitize women about how to plan a family and take control of their lives. Our facility will serve the surrounding villages and educate not only the women but also the communities in which they reside.

By offering contraception to mothers after giving birth in our maternity ward, educating during the antenatal process, combined with the location of the clinic next to the under-fives health care room, we will be able to protect more women and give them the ability to make their own decisions and choose for themselves.

Conclusion

Across the board, with improved funding we would have the capacity to treat many more patients, save many more lives and avoid long term, often unnecessary suffering among the population.

	LABORATORY			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1
Total tests	4,271	4,406	3,814	12,491
Malaria	1,530	347	312	2,189
Typhoid	800	208	179	1,187

Ways to Donate

All donations, big or small, are always welcome. We appreciate all gestures which will allow our action in Sierra Leone to succeed.

We accept donations in several currencies.
In Switzerland, the donations are tax deductible.

For bank transfers:

Beneficiary: Action Swiss Sierra Leone
Bank: UBS SA, 1260 Nyon, Suisse. CCP 80-2-2
BIC (Swift): UBSWCHZH80A

For the hospital:

IBAN for donations in **CHF**: CH30 0022 8228 5536 2701J
IBAN for donations in **EUR**: CH84 0022 8228 5536 2761V
IBAN for donations in **USD**: CH53 0022 8228 5536 2760A

For the Friends of the Magbenteh Community Hospital

Would you like to become a Friend of the Magbenteh Community Hospital?
Visit our website : www.assl-ch.org

Set up a standing order with your bank:

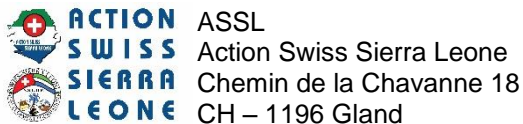
IBAN: CH41 0022 8228 5536 27M3 U
Account «Action Swiss Sierra Leone»
Monthly standing order of CHF 50.00

For the school sponsorship:

IBAN for donations in **CHF**: CH30 0022 8228 5536 27M1k
Don't forget to specify which area you would like to donate to:

- Hospital
- Orphanage/Boarding School
- Maternity Ward
- Children under 5
- Children

A big thank you to your generosity. Thanks to your contribution, we can continue our action in Sierra Leone and therefore, support the most in need.



Tel : +41 22 364 27 93
Direction : info@assl-ch.org
Sponsorship : parrainage@assl-ch.org