



\$142,000 Rotary International Global Grant Propels Chiefdom To Grow Its Future

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**AND, 67 individual donors
contributed more than
\$25,000 resulting in \$37,500+
in matching support!**

All of the funding for the Rotary International Global Grant (\$142,030) is now in the account of the Freetown Rotary Club. A site visit has been conducted by Rotarian Theodora Wilkinson of the Freetown Rotary Club and transfers are being made to the implementing organization, the Center for Community Empowerment and Transformation (CCET).



The dream of Chief Charles Caulker to develop his chiefdom using its own agricultural traditions is now being realized. He wanted to grow fruit trees in his verdant tropical chiefdom that would produce income for community development in the years to come.

“If we could raise fruit trees on a big enough scale, we could grow our own community’s future. We could move to eliminate poverty in the chiefdom ourselves and make people self-reliant.” Chief said.



Construction of a Storage Building is Underway

As the first two orchards begin to produce a storage facility is critical to safely care for the harvest before it goes to market. Funding for its construction is part of this 2nd Global Grant.

Once the orchards are fully producing it is estimated that by 2023 they will generate at least \$50,000 a year to support education and indigent healthcare for hospital patients.

But in Sierra Leone, too often it's one step forward and two steps back. Barely had recovery from Sierra Leone's brutal 11-year rebel war begun, when the Ebola epidemic hit in 2014. A three-year economic crisis followed with 40 percent devaluation of its currency. Just surviving was a struggle.

Now, this two-year Rotary International Global Grant is changing that.

The Rotary Club of Ann Arbor worked collaboratively with Sherbro Foundation to secure the Grant. Administered by CCET, it funds community-led agriculture projects designed to create income for children's education and resident medical care; and to help women subsistence farmers achieve self-reliance.

Nonprofit Social Enterprise The Grant creates a chiefdom social enterprise, one where agriculture projects generate regular income for nonprofit purposes. Thanks to Rotary clubs, CCET's Orchards for Education project is expanding to plant thousands of fruit trees to fund chiefdom education. An orchard is being planted to feed a benevolent fund, that pays local hospital care costs residents cannot afford. And, women farmers are being funded to grow peanuts to feed and educate their children.



Full-time orchard workers display their protective gear purchased from the Rotary grant: rain suits for working in the rainy season and thick rubber boots for protection against injury and snakes.



700 coconut trees are flourishing in the first Rotary funded orchard, as well as lime, grapefruit, African plum, avocado, guava, soursop, oil palm and cassava. Most were grown in CCET's tree nursery from local fruit seed.

With the generous support of Rotary Clubs, growing its own future is becoming reality in Bumpeh Chiefdom.

It's a future they can direct themselves and multiply like seed from a harvest.

This project definitely took a village to launch—an American village. So many contributed to raising funds for this \$142,000 grant.

This is the second Rotary Club Global Grant spearheaded by the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor. The Wilmington Rotary Club spearheaded securing support for the Hospital Benevolent Fund Orchard. And, 17 other Rotary Clubs contributed to the Grant. Sherbro Foundation continues its role as the Cooperating Partner, providing project management and fiduciary oversight. The Rotary International Foundation and two Rotary Districts provided matching funds.

Grant Impact A total of 60 acres of orchards with 4000 fruit trees will be developed through the two Rotary grants, as well as a tree nursery, a watering system and storehouse. In three to five years, the orchards will provide long-term



Chief Caulker, center, and Rosaline Kaimbay, CCET Managing Director, right, accept the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor flag from Mary Avrakotos. Dale Smith, Wilmington Rotary Club, left, led fundraising for the medical care component of the Grant.

fruit income for education and hospital medical care for Bumpeh Chiefdom's 40,000 mostly illiterate residents.

Some 260 subsistence-level women farmers can double their incomes by growing peanuts with supplies they receive from the project. How can something as seemingly small as \$50 for a bale of peanut seed and a drying tarp impact the women? The spokeswoman for recent participants said it best, "Indeed, our lives have been transformed."



Local women are hired as part-time workers where heavy labor is not needed. These are planting peanuts in an orchard to generate annual operating income. They're paid wages equal to those of part-time male workers.

Empowering Women

From the project's initial work, Chief said he feels best about empowering women subsistence farmers. By supplying women to grow peanuts as a cash crop and hiring others to grow vegetables and peanuts for the project, Chief said, "we have brought hope to ending the growing economic and gender inequalities in our country."

"Women, who before now were relegated to the kitchen, can confess to becoming breadwinners in their families, sometimes above their husbands"

Their peanut harvests act as reserves, to sell as they need cash to feed their children. When annual school expenses or unplanned health care costs come up, the women can fall back on their peanut harvest to pay for them. They no longer need to take out high interest moneylender loans.

Big Ripple Effect The Rotary funded projects are having a big ripple effect in this rural community. The projects create 20 full-time jobs in a subsistence farming area with virtually no wage paying jobs. One hundred part-time and seasonal workers are also hired. Families' lives improve with a regular wage-earner.



Chief Caulker and project agriculture manager Ibrahim Rogers, right, inspect African plum tree seedlings grown from seed for the project. They are being planted now in the June rains.

In addition to being paid, Chief Caulker explained the bigger effect these jobs have on his chiefdom. The workers are learning improved growing techniques and skills under the direction of CCET's agriculture manager, he said. They'll take this home and apply it to their own farms and gardens. They'll teach neighbors how to get better yields, too.

Chief Caulker said he himself is working to act as a role model to teach people by example. He's growing his own fruit trees in different parts of the chiefdom and annual crops like cassava. When people see they can earn more money with fast growing fruit trees like guava plus cassava and vegetables than in traditional rice growing, they start diversifying and growing more crops themselves.