



Start Performing Community Organisation - Sierra Leone (SPCO-SL) EMERGENCY RADIO SCHOOL BROADCASTS / Educational Facility for Universal Advancement (EFUA-SL)

Sierra Leone, West Africa, is a tourist paradise and an economic regional powerhouse. The people survived more than 10 years of one of the bloodiest and brutal of civil wars due to their resilient nature. They emerged to demonstrate to the rest of the world a cultural awareness and a determination not to let tribal, regional or religious differences get in the way of acting in unity for the common good. This friendly and generous disposition is the hallmark of the nation and what makes the country such an inviting destination. Sierra Leoneans know and practise the powerful benefits of music and sport in their lives. David Beckham's position as a UNICEF Ambassador for Children is a welcome initiative.

The recent onset of Ebola has become a devastating blow to the economic growth and development of all industries. The problem was exacerbated by the government having no other option but to close all schools to try to alleviate the spread of the disease. This especially affected the children and young adults who have no chance to develop themselves and therefore eventually influence the structure and future of the country. Girls are particularly damaged by this as their absence from school or other formal education presents the real danger that they will never re-engage with this right in the future.

The government started to address the problem by initiating a school radio and television programme supported by UNICEF. This programme broadcasts every day to the three levels: Primary, Junior and Secondary. This has been extremely well received at all levels and is delivered to more than one million children and interested adults.

Efua Mammah is a six year old girl who came up with the original thought of how school lessons broadcast by radio could easily be missed or misunderstood. She asked how pupils or their parents might be able to go back to the lesson again, so gave birth to the idea of recording the lessons. This simple yet effective idea has now gained the active support of national and independent radio stations and the Minister of Education.

In order to progress and establish credibility, a formal Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed with the Ministry of Education and SPCO-SL to authorise access of the educational broadcast material so that we can launch an educational pilot in four different areas:

- * **Juba**, an affluent area of Freetown with usually a high proportion of students and high quality schools.
- * **Black Jackson**, a poor rural area with no school or teachers. Most children have never been given the opportunity to study, the nearest school 6 kilometres away.
- * **Bureh Beach**, a rural area with its own school and normally healthy attendance of students.
- * **Kambia**, an orphanage with its own school.

SPCO has sourced the MP3 players which are both solar and wind-up powered, at a cost of \$79.95 each. Transport, insurance, import tax, administrative, maintenance and replacement costs must be added.



**Start
Performing
Community
Organisation**

Registered Charity No:
1139530

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In the EFUA pilot 440 children across the 4 areas will have access to education for three months for some children it will be a first time educational opportunity.

This proposal has the potential to open up access to girls that has never before been available. Often a girl child is supposed to help with domestic chores before thinking about going to school with EFUA she can access these programmes in her own time.

The same applies to many young children and orphans forced to sell goods every day on the street to survive.

We address this project overview to any interested person/body/organisation that can assist in any way.

We are trying to raise money through funders, partners and money generated by release of our musical anthem, to run a three month pilot project of the Educational Facility for Universal Advancement (EFUA-SL) programme.

Local residents of Black Johnson, a village on the Western Peninsula, unable to engage in other work because of curfews and other restrictions, have met regularly, rehearsed, performed and recorded original musical material for the purpose of engaging with the outside world. The material they have produced is inspiring, entertaining, original and informative. The music has been recorded in Sierra Leone, registered for royalties and ready for release. Promotional work already shows there is a great amount of enthusiasm. International distribution and play is certain.

The NGO responsible for the pilot programme is our existing Sierra Leone based charity,

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and SPCO (Start Performing Community Organisation) www.spc.org.uk (UK charity 1139530)

We have already acquired an 11 acre site for a proposed school in Black Johnson which has been surveyed and registered with the Ministry of Surveys and Lands. To have 11 acres of land donated by the community, duly and properly registered is a massive achievement. It is indicative of the support for the school by the whole community and we have been working hard at this for four years. We see the radio school and the EFUA-SL as bringing a real prospect of opening a school in the village this year.

We have an active cultural exchange with Sebright School in the London Borough of Hackney which has proved to be invaluable to Sebright and Black Johnson children and communities.

The cultural exchange is a great success, we have many letters, photographs and exchanged traditional stories, songs and culture. There is support from Sebright for the formation of our school and a detailed Year 1 – 6 learning goals has been developed. Its theme is Fairness and Equality in Sierra Leone. This is a theme replicated in Sierra Leone's Constitutional Review.



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The Lifeplayer MP3

The Lifeplayer is the first multi media player, multi-band radio and recorder designed and engineered for the humanitarian sector. This innovative tool combines these technologies in ways never before possible to deliver on-demand content anytime, anywhere.

The Lifeplayer is powered by a detachable solar panel and has a winding mechanism as a back-up power source. In addition, it comes with an optional 12v wall charger for when electricity is available. With its outstanding speaker quality 60 listeners can hear it clearly.

www.lifelineenergy.org





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The Lifelayer has a broad spectrum of features that include:

- FM, AM and three short-wave radio bands
- 128 GB of pre-loaded content in any subject or language. Unlimited content updated via micro-SD cards
- Programming that can be factory or locally loaded as needed on micro-SD cards
- Radio or live voice recordings for playback later
- On-board monitoring and evaluation software to determine how the device is being used
- Battery and electricity independent capability, using solar or wind-up technology to charge
- Ability to be charged via mains or a car battery

440 children will be educated for three months using 40 Lifelayers and 40 4Gig microSD memory cards.

SPCO-SL is liaising closely with Sierra Leone's Education Minister and officials. Many TEFL and ESOL teachers have agreed to voluntary teaching, once the school is up and running the need to ensure continuity of high quality teaching and curriculum development will take precedence over "well intentioned" volunteers who might see this as a short term CV enhancing activity.

In general terms, there are many charities and organisations already engaged with the Ministry of Education, including UNICEF, however the EFUA-SL pilot project is exclusive to SPCO-SL.

The formal understanding is between the Ministry of Education and Jane Gbandewa, on behalf of SPCO-SL.

This is the only formal MoU that has been authorised and the reproduction, distribution of the Emergency Radio Programmes is on the strict agreement that everything is reproduced and distributed for free.

The aim is to make educational opportunities freely available to all children and adults.

If the EFUA-SL pilot is successful, the charities aims is to scale up and roll out throughout Sierra Leone.

SPCO-SL had also been developing plans for an eco-resort with sports and community focus. This is presently on hold due to the Ebola outbreak, details can be found at www.jaysbar.net with information on SPCO volunteering.