EBOLA RECOVERY IN SIERRA LEONE

RESTORING LIVELIHOODS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Over 18 months, the project will support People Living with Disabilities (PLWD) to recommence livelihood initiatives that were reduced by the impacts of the Ebola crisis.

The Project will map communities of PLWD and engage in market research and gap analyses to embark on new initiatives for communities and people that are begging to survive.

**Expected results:**

**100 livelihood initiatives across 45 communities restored.** Seed money will be provided with refresher trainings, up to 2,100 households will benefit and at least half of the participants will be women living with disabilities.

**50 new livelihood initiatives will be established and run by PLWD.** 15 communities will be targeted, based on need and market research. The 50 groups involved will include between five and ten people. PLWD who are not part of established homes and communities will be targeted for inclusion. At least half of the participants will be women living with disabilities.

**Participants supported during the setting up and restoration of sustainable livelihood initiatives.** 1,200 participants provided with $30USD per month for a period of six months until sustainable livelihoods initiatives are up and running.

The programme will be led by UNDP in partnership with local Civil Society Organization (CSO) One Family People, Handicap International and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs

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**Why it matters:**

People living with disabilities are one of the vulnerable groups most affected by the secondary impacts of the Ebola crisis.

Livelihood programmes and initiatives that were set up in communities across the country were hit-hard by the economic slump. The ‘no touch’ policy adopted to halt the spread of Ebola also negatively affected the mobility of PLWD and their ability to maintain their livelihoods.

Most people living with disabilities were on the margins of society, even before Ebola. Due to stigma, superstition and limited job opportunities, PLWD are most often
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impoverished and resort to begging for their livelihoods.

Before the Ebola outbreak, some progress was made to establish sustainable livelihoods options for PLWD, but these were negatively impacted by the crisis, and seed money is no longer available.

Stigma and discrimination against PLWD increased during the crisis due to their often-unsanitary living conditions and the association with Ebola transmission. Women living with disabilities have been disproportionately affected economically and therefore are even more vulnerable to extreme poverty, discrimination and abuse than before the crisis.

The proposed project will provide PLWD with the means and the skills to restart businesses and to set up new initiatives. In turn this will help to reduce their risk of contracting Ebola through reducing their reliance on begging. The project will also work towards reducing stigma against PLWD through showcasing their independence and tenacity, and building mutually beneficial relationships between PLWD living in camps and the people in surrounding areas.

Project activities:

The project will run from June 2015 to December 2016, covering 10 districts – Koinadugu, Kambia, Moyamba, Port Loko, Bo, Kenema, Tonkolili, Pujehun, Kailahun and Freetown.

The project is key in supporting the government’s efforts towards socio-economic recovery post-Ebola and the provision of safety nets to the most vulnerable sections of the population.

Restoring livelihoods for people living with disabilities

A mapping of livelihood initiatives already set up in 45 communities across the country. An assessment of each initiative, how it was working before Ebola, how it has been impacted and how it can be restarted and improved will be carried out with disabled people’s organizations at the local level. Seed money, training and tools will be provided to restart initiatives and improve upon them, ensuring sustainability. There will be a particular focus on ensuring that at least 50 percent of participants are women.

Creating new livelihood opportunities for PLWDs

A market study and needs assessment will be carried out to establish solid business and training plans for PLWD, at least 50 percent of which will be women, living in 15 communities. The study will create job opportunities for PLWD outside of camps and will support the creation of new initiatives in communities. There will also be a focus on including PLWD outside of camps and creating partnerships between PLWD and their surrounding communities.

Building a safety net for PLWDs during the establishment of more sustainable initiatives

Target groups cannot be expected to fully engage in the project whilst also begging to support themselves. Small stipends of $30USD per month for six months with therefore be provided for 1,200 participants.

Budget:

Component 1: $200,000; Component 2: $500,000; Component 3: $216,000. Total: $916,000USD
Why UNDP?

When the Ebola crisis first hit Sierra Leone, UNDP reprogrammed its activities to provide support to the most vulnerable groups that had been largely overlooked, including people living with disabilities. Through a partnership with One Family People – a dynamic and effective local organization – UNDP reached over 2,500 PLWD across the country with preventative information and materials.

PLWD were also supported to join the response and to have their particular concerns heard through participation in radio discussions and at District Ebola Response Committee meetings. UNDP also supported the distribution of Ebola related materials in braille and sign language and the dissemination of prevention jingles and music performed by artists with disabilities.

As the outbreak progressed and more information on the needs of PLWD reached UNDP through local partners on the ground, it became clear that survival had become difficult for some communities. UNDP therefore supported the distribution of solidarity kits including food and basic needs to 700 households affected by disability. UNDP has seen first-hand the degradation of livelihood initiatives, many of which were set up by partners One Family People and Handicap International. These partners also have extensive information on each community of PLWD, their needs and their capacities.