

EduNations Inc.  
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# EDUNATIONS



MARCH 2018

## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you for your continued prayers and contributions to EduNations. Please know that your prayers and contributions bring hope to countless individuals in Sierra Leone. Many have come to a new hope and to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through your support.

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## Update from the Field

By: Jeff Gingrich and Samuel Sesay

### Schools Update

All our schools reopened in September as staff and students returned quite prepared for the new school year. The Global Giving Campaign provided funding for the essential school supplies of teaching and materials in our schools. Thank you again for all those who helped to support that project. In addition, though we do not have a building, we have begun teaching the first year of Junior Secondary School (JSS) to approximately 25 students in Rokassa who have completed primary

school. We are currently drawing up plans for construction of a JSS and hope to start a capital campaign for that soon. This will then complete providing education through JSS in all the communities where EduNations operates schools. Ultimately, we hope to construct a Senior Secondary School with housing for students in Rokassa where children from the other villages could continue their studies. We are

satisfied with the determination and commitment by both staff and students towards achieving the goals of this school year.



Rokassa Schools

### EduNations Microfinance LG

As the EduNations Board seeks to empower communities through education, we also hope to promote development and to generate funds for school operations. A decision was made to explore a microfinance project, a concept which has been quite successful in Sierra Leone (EduNations Microfinance LG). This project can be used

to empower our employees, individuals and communities economically. Interest profit from these loans will be used to support school operations. We are delighted to report that the registration is almost complete, a new office building has been rented for this in Makeni as a substantial amount of the start-up cost for this project has been provided. Board member Jeff

Gingrich was recently in Sierra Leone reviewing the Business Plan, Credit Manual and interviewing candidates for employment in the Microfinance project. Additional capital donations would be welcome if this is an area you would consider supporting. It is our hope and prayer that this project will help EduNations towards a path of sustainability.

# Orfonthy Community Health Center

As anticipated, since opening in October 2017, the Orfonthy Community Health Center in Rokassa continues to serve a great number of patients from Rokassa and the neighboring communities. The clinic is quickly developing a reputation of community trust that the medications are effective and that the staff are genuine in their attempts to improve health. A solar system has been installed to provide sufficient electricity for lighting as needed 24/7 in the clinic and staff housing. A solar powered water pump to provide running water for toilets and hand washing has also been installed. With a total of six (6) local staff under the leadership of Jericho Road Ministry and medication received through Direct Relief,

the center continues to see an average of 300 patients a month. In January, there were 323 patients seen and no neonatal or maternal death was reported. Board member Dr. Jeff Gingrich who was recently in country and Dr. Aiah Lebbie, a Pan African Association of Christian Surgeons, (PAACS) trained Sierra Leonean Pediatric Surgeons and helped to see patients. Primary conditions being treated in addition to free prenatal support and children under 5, are free medical care to students enrolled in school, malaria treatment, aches, pains and light trauma from manual work, and screening for unrecognized hypertension and diabetes. We continue to meet with the community leaders and regional government health officials to assess the clinic's role

in the current system and areas for expansion. It has become very clear that we need to construct some latrines outside the clinic as the 2 restrooms inside are not enough for patients, families, and staff. In addition, we are in need of building an incinerator to properly dispose of medical and other waste from clinic operations. Our next clinical steps are to expand collaboration with the government expertise and resources to participate in vaccine distribution, nutrition education, and other services. The vaccination program has been made possible by donations to purchase and install the solar powered WHO approved refrigerator in the clinic.

## Struggles for our Female Students

Since the start of the school year, we have witnessed the painful struggles of our female students and some of their parents in the areas of cultural participation, teenage pregnancy, school drop-out and early marriage. Our Psychosocial Coordinator Fatu has been dealing with disappointment, family disputes and despair. We have seen female students being withdrawn from school to participate for 2 weeks or more in the Female Genital Mutilation activities. The Laws of Sierra Leone forbid the forceful mutilation of girls under 18 years. Sadly, this is only in principle in remote communities. Our dearly beloved female students are helpless in resistance of their families and sometimes whole communities when it comes to these 'cultural practices'. Similarly, we are dismayed by teenage pregnancy, school drop out and early marriage. Since schools reopened in September we are aware of 7 pregnancies in our JSSs. Innocent girls are being taken advantage of, frequently without the cooperation of the parents to press charges. The long legal proceedings we have experienced supporting the parents who seek our assistance in pressing charges have been frustrating. In most cases, while the teenage girls are struggling with pregnancy, child motherhood and in some cases forced marriages, the male perpetrators are moving freely in the communities. Please keep all our girls in prayer especially these 7.



# The Pa Santigie Rokassa Garden

In keeping with a goal of achieving financial sustainability, we accepted an offer to manage a 40-acre garden owned by the village chief Pa Santigie Kamara. He is personally getting too old to continue the strenuous physical work himself but is willing and able to oversee younger workers. The garden grows palm oil, pineapples, kola nuts, tola nuts, some cashew and orange trees, but had become somewhat overgrown in the last few years since he has been unable to keep it up on his own. We had hoped that we could manage the garden for at least one year investing our resources there and expect to generate an income that will support our school and clinic operations in Rokassa. After 10 months of operations, startup costs and salaries for the 4 full time and 30 part time jobs this has created, revenue is almost even with the expenses. The good news is that some 2,500 pineapple suckers have been planted in an extension of the garden which will more than quadruple production over 2 years. We are considering steps in re-placing some of the older palm oil trees, planting additional pineapple and cashew trees to increase the likelihood of achieving our objective to create sustainable jobs and to generate local funds to support our school and clinic operations in the coming years.

## New Church Building

We are thankful that the generosity of the Slickville Evangelical Presbyterian Church resulted in the building of the EPC church in Mapainda. With the visit of Rev. Tom Holmes in April, we are looking forward to the formal opening of this new church. We will next begin seeking funds for church construction in Mayatta.

## Sierra Leone to the Polls

Sierra Leone is poised to hold its Presidential and Parliamentary elections on March 7<sup>th</sup> this year. A total of 17 political parties have been registered and there is a great concern that there will be sporadic violence and intimidation. Please pray for a free and fair elections and for protection of everyone during polling day.

## New Vehicle

Many thanks to all the people, families, and church ministries who gave generously towards the purchase of the new, used vehicle for EduNations. We have been able to purchase the new vehicle which we hope will help make our regular visits to our schools and churches much easier. Tenki.



For more updates and pictures, go to [www.edunations.org](http://www.edunations.org) or "like" our Facebook page!

# Fundraising Updates and Opportunities

By: Sarah Pietryga

## Benefit Yoga Open House

Last month, EduNations partnered with Precision Physical Therapy and Performance to put on a Yoga Open House. The pay-what-you-wish event began with a 1-hour, instructor-led yoga class and concluded with an ice-cream and coffee social, provided by Churn. There was even live music provided by a local DJ! All proceeds from the event went to EduNations and we were able to raise over \$600! Thank you to everybody who came out and joined us for this event...we had so much fun!



## 2018 Pittsburgh Marathon



Pittsburgh friends! EduNations is officially registered as a contributing charity for the 2018 Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend taking place May 4-6. We are looking for friends to join our team! You can choose to run any of the races in the Pittsburgh Marathon and raise money for EduNations. Not a runner? That's okay! There are Team EduNations volunteer opportunities available as well. If you would like more information on how to join our team, please contact Sarah Pietryga at [sarah@edunations.org](mailto:sarah@edunations.org) or 412-522-4756. #ignitinghopestepbystep

## Our Biggest Need

As EduNations continues to expand we have more school buildings, students, and teachers than ever before and we are so excited! With this growth comes increasing challenges in funding. At this time, we are inviting you to support our students and schools in Sierra Leone by designating your giving to our most pressing needs. These needs are ever-changing, but funding typically goes toward teacher salaries, school materials, basic repairs and maintenance to our school buildings, and other urgent projects to benefit our students.

We thank you in advance for your partnership and support!