

## November 2009 Newsletter

For those interested in more regular news about EducAid's activities, please refer to [www.educaidsierraleone.blogspot.com](http://www.educaidsierraleone.blogspot.com)

### What a year!

2009 has seen EducAid helping greater and greater numbers of students achieve meaningful education. We currently have over 1,500 students—100 more than we budgeted for. We have again performed outstandingly in the public exams and have had the first girls from the Women's Project go through the system and achieve good grades in the junior public exams. Record numbers of EducAid students are now in college and university, and we have seen our second pupil awarded a scholarship to continue studies in China. But these things have all happened against the hardest backdrop imaginable. Tragically, we have lost students to curable illnesses, and Alhassan Sesay died needlessly while on holiday back in Sierra Leone from the UK. Medical facilities in Sierra Leone are in an appalling state, and it is dispiriting to watch the helplessness of the population in the face of treatable conditions. The statistics are sobering: 1 in 4 children die under the age of 5; the average life expectancy is 41; 1 in 8 women can expect to die in pregnancy or childbirth. Meanwhile, the elite continue their stranglehold on the resources and opportunities. Did the direct violence of the war kill more people than the indirect violence of corruption-led poverty? I very much doubt it. What is the answer? Again and again we come back to the same point. Education is the key to building a generation that can challenge corruption and injustice. Through education, we can break through the apathy and empower the next generation through consciousness of their rights and responsibilities. Accordingly, we battle on.

### The lights are on!

For as long as people can remember, the National Power Authority [NPA] has been working on a hydro-electricity project. The plant is due any day now for commissioning and in between times, the lights have been on for a large part of most days in many parts of Freetown. It is revolutionising our lives. It is not a full voltage but it is definitely a good start.



EducAid Lumley [Freetown] lit with the new supply of electricity from NPA.



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Kadiatu Tholley, Mabinty Bangura, Hassanatu Sheriff – the first girls from the Women’s Project to work their way through and sit the junior public exams – congratulations and we wish them well for the rest of their academic journey! Ambitious young women are hard to find here.

The successful Magbeni students before they squeeze into the van to go to Freetown.



### Prayer Corner

Please continue to pray for EducAid. Please pray that:

- we are able to have an impact on the realities of the terrible poverty in Sierra Leone
- the funding continues to be forthcoming so we continue to deliver high quality education to as many youngsters as possible
- our students will have the courage to use their education for good and with integrity

### Success breeds success [but it causes problems too!]

Each year, one of the measures of our success is the public exam results. This year, for the first time, we have been mentioned in official despatches on the radio and in the local newspapers. Firstly, we were commended for coming 5<sup>th</sup> in the country in the Senior exams [WASSCE – West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination]. Secondly, in the junior exams [BECE – Basic Education Certificate Examination] our schools were acknowledged for ranking within the top ten in the areas in which we operate [Northern and Western]. Magbeni deserves special note for achieving the top results in the BECE for the whole Northern area. Wherever they turn, EducAid staff are, very justly, congratulated on the excellent job done. Because of these sustained successes, people are slowly starting to take the EducAid schools seriously, despite our unpainted schools and un-uniformed students! We are inundated with requests for admission for students we cannot begin to find space for. In addition, the up-country students who have just fared so well in their junior exams need space to live in Freetown in order to continue their senior secondary education.

### Appreciation

The needs do not diminish but seem daily to grow here. We are extremely grateful therefore to all those who make our work possible through their generosity. Forty-nine cyclists raised approximately £30,000 in a sponsored bike ride from Paris to Brussels in September and are not likely to forget it in a hurry! Many of you support us through regular donations and standing orders. Without this, none of EducAid’s work is possible.

Those of you who would like to make a donation can find the necessary details on:

[http://www.educaid.org.uk/EducAid\\_Sierra\\_Leone/Donate\\_to\\_EducAid.html](http://www.educaid.org.uk/EducAid_Sierra_Leone/Donate_to_EducAid.html)