

## March 2013 Newsletter

For those interested in more regular news about EducAid's activities, please refer to: [www.educaidsierraleone.blogspot.com](http://www.educaidsierraleone.blogspot.com) and [www.sierraleonegirls.blogspot.com](http://www.sierraleonegirls.blogspot.com) and the EducAid Sierra Leone Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/48572325218/>

### Recent Success:

#### **Abdul Noah Mansaray wrote this letter to the EducAid trustees on completion of his degree:**

It is my pleasure to write to you. I am Abdul Noah Mansaray, a past student of EducAid (The house that built me). Thank you for building that house. I deeply appreciate your fortitude. I spent four years in EducAid from Group 2 level to Group A level where I got all my holistic educational foundation that helped me immensely in my university education. I served as a volunteer junior staff for a year until I got financial support from Emile and Christo to enter the university.

I am pleased to inform you that I got a First class first division (1:1) in Accounting and Finance, leading my class. This success is primarily based on the fact that I got a strong foundation from EducAid.

At this point I must take the opportunity to thank you, James, Swithun, Miriam and all the others for steering the ship of this institution to this point. We are very grateful for this your philanthropic and humanitarian strides. I am blessed to have EducAid as my Alma mater.

Once again thank you so much,  
Best Regards.



**Abdul Noah Mansaray** completed what is normally a six year course at secondary school in four years, finishing at sixteen. The personalised learning system at EducAid makes it possible for those needing more support to get it and those able to move forwards more quickly to do so. Congratulations to Abdul Noah. We wish him every success as he moves on upwards. He is already a credit to all involved in his education so far.

#### **Saidu Sesay (SS Dem) RIP**



Saidu Sesay joined EducAid as a business studies teacher in 2003 and was the longest serving teacher until a few weeks ago when he died in his village of an unknown illness. Tragically, his family would not allow us to bring him to Freetown for treatment and had declared his illness to be due to ancestral anger!

SS was a wonderful and colourful character. He was humorous and lively, intelligent and quick, compassionate and caring. It is hard to remember the many stories about SS that circulate in the EducAid family without smiling. He has touched enormous numbers of lives with his subject teaching and more importantly his counselling. We will not remember SS's life as a successful one because he built many houses or accumulated great wealth, although he endlessly undertook enterprises to enable him to support family members and friends. We will remember his life as a successful one because of the love he imparted to so many young people in his care. He will be greatly missed within the EducAid family and beyond.



SSDem junior – his young nephew.

*"If your plan is for one year, plant rice. If your plan is for ten years, plant trees. If your plan is for one hundred years, educate children." Confucius*

### Rights & Responsibilities

It has always been a key concern of ours that our students know their responsibilities in society and whatever communities they belong to. All of our students undertake a two-week period of community service each year and find it dignifying and rewarding. It is hard work being on the receiving end of aid all the time and the discovery that they have something to give is truly empowering.

Alongside this we have a number of activities that are designed to build up the youngsters' consciousness of their rights and how to access them. There is the Girl Power Group where girls learn about their rights before the law. In Maronka there is a 'Rights R Us' club where the primary school children discuss and then prepare dramas about a range of rights issues that are relevant to them: girls' education, female circumcision, the right to property and more. In Rogbere, there is a new Legal Club where a paralegal visits weekly to discuss various legal issues, teaching the students what should and should not happen in the various legal and justice institutions.

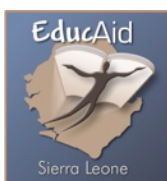


On his community service, 'Wise' is running the 'Rights R Us' club.



Obai, Maronka chief, addresses the school on the wrongs of corporal punishment

**EducAid's new Advisory Board** In 2013 we are establishing an Advisory Board in the UK which consists of a small group of motivated philanthropic individuals who are committed to our values and have a working knowledge of our projects. They will advise the Trustees on matters of governance and strategy and we are confident that their involvement will enable us to expand our programme and deliver a high quality education to more young people.



**PO Box 27143,  
Edinburgh,  
EH10 9AW, UK**

**Contact Dr James Boardman**

**E- Mail [james@educaid.org.uk](mailto:james@educaid.org.uk)  
Website [www.educaid.org.uk](http://www.educaid.org.uk)  
Patron Alex Ross.**

**Thank you** to all of you who continue to donate to EducAid. None of our activities are possible without your generosity. If you would like to sign up as a regular donor [e.g. **£15 per month** pays for education and food for one student] or make a one-off donation, please go to:  
[http://educaid.org.uk/EducAid\\_Sierra\\_Leone/Donate\\_to\\_EducAid.html](http://educaid.org.uk/EducAid_Sierra_Leone/Donate_to_EducAid.html)

**Isatu Kamara**



Isatu joined EducAid against her father's advice as he wanted her to be in a higher class and he had bought her uniform for the local school but he could not always afford the materials and this caused problems for Isatu and she realised that she was not as strong as she should be for the level he wanted her at. Every day Isatu would pretend to go to school in the uniform wearing her other clothes underneath. She would then hide the uniform and attend EducAid instead. Isatu did this until she passed her junior secondary public exams (BECE). When Isatu showed him her results her father was proud of her and he sent her older brother to EducAid as well. Isatu is now teaching in the Maronka Primary School, working in the Girls' Safe House and has started her distance teacher-training course: a strong young woman who is an excellent role model to the girls in her charge.

### **Teacher training undertaken by inspiring young teachers**

One of the exciting developments in EducAid at the moment and a way we think we can most effectively help the greatest number of young people, is the 'Quality Enhancement Programme'. This involves outreach and partnership with a number of rural junior secondary schools. EducAid invites all the teachers of a particular subject to come for a week of training at a time e.g. all the maths teachers in January for a week, all the Language Arts teachers in February for a week and so on. After just one round of trainings in the core subjects, most schools are reporting improved public exam results and have requested further support.

In January we started a round of trainings with all the teachers in each of the partner schools. On this occasion we worked with them on girl friendly education approaches, motivating students and whole school reward focused behaviour management i.e. what to do when you take their canes away. This has been well received by all and a new round of subject focused trainings started in mid February with the exciting addition of five schools who have heard about the programme and requested to join up. These schools are from all over the country and shows how this model might be used to have a real impact much further afield than our current scope.

Another aspect that augurs well for a wider reach for the programme is the fact that our young teachers are more than able to deliver these sessions despite their youth and their relative lack of experience. They are confident and competent and more than used to creative and critical thinking in somewhat stark contrast to the majority of the far more experienced teachers they are training.



*Alusine Barrie (left), finished his senior secondary exams last summer and is teaching in the primary school. Here he leads a group of teachers from three schools in thinking differently about behaviour management.*



### **Visit from the Trustees**

James Boardman and Swithun Mason founded EducAid on the back of a student exchange programme they participated in 1993. Once in a while they get a chance to come back and visit. This February was one of those rare occasions. They managed to rope in some others, including long term EducAid supporter and new Chair of the EducAid Advisory Board, Adrian Carr, and the full group numbered eight. It was brief but they got the picture. They visited all the sites, discussed with staff and students, observed performances and displays, congratulated the newly qualifying teachers and were able to participate in the events at the British High Commissioner's Residence while there. For those of us who are close to the chalk face the changes seem to be happening very slowly. For the visitors it was clear that much had happened since their last visit and seeing it 'in the flesh' brought it to life far more than any report:

*The visiting team found EducAid Sierra Leone in excellent 'health', with real promise of further potential for solid achievement, having a teaching and management method which is now tried, tested and well proven.*



**Miriam Mason-Sesay addressing the assembled friends and supporters of EducAid at the Residence of the British High Commissioner in Freetown, Sierra Leone.**

### **EducAid in the New Year's Honours List**

We were very excited this year to have EducAid's work recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. In general, people receive their honours at Buckingham Palace from the queen or another member of the Royal Family. It was felt however that in the circumstances, it would be more fitting, if done in Sierra Leone among all those that make EducAid happen day to day on the ground. Lesley Beaton, Acting High Commissioner, received a great crowd at the British High Commissioner's Residence. Some senior members of the government of Sierra Leone were asked for their support to sort out some of the constraints that EducAid experiences in their relationships with the various institutions it deals with: Ministries of Education, Lands and Finance to name but a few.

We anticipate a positive outcome on these issues in the next few weeks, as a result. Thank you to Mike Ruse for his work on the nomination.