



in partnership with



present

**The
NEHEMIAH
Project
&
Kuntorloh
Community School**



**For children traumatised by
war in Sierra Leone**

**An integrated approach to releasing
children back into the community as part
of the solution, rather than the problem.**

**Providing education, vocational training,
counselling & behaviour modification.**

sponsored by: Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund
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Member of the Child Protection Committee, Freetown

Diana
THE WORK CONTINUES

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Working with Children affected by War

As a result of their experiences suffered during the long and bloody civil war in Sierra Leone, thousands of children have been severely traumatised. In 1996 the Sierra Leone government invited LifeLine West Africa Indigenous Ministries (LWAIM), in association with LifeLine Network International (LNI), to set up a project for the rehabilitation of some of these children. A further development, resulting from the conflict, has been the setting up of a primary education facility, known as Kuntorloh Community School.

Working with 140 children in the rehabilitation programme and with over 700 attending the school, the capital costs of these projects are now approximately £10,000 with annual running costs of £88,000.

Please read on to find out more about the project, and how you could be involved.

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Please make cheques payable to: The Nehemiah Project

If, after reading this information, you would like to make a donation, and you pay income tax in the UK, then to ensure the project receives the full benefit your gift offers, please make use of the Gift Aid Declaration form which can be found at the back of this brochure.

Identifying The Need

Just imagine yourself as a ten year old, and you have just watched as your parents are murdered in front of you. A little while later you are befriended by a group of older people carrying guns, who say they will help you get revenge on your parent's killers. They feed and clothe you. You're taught to clean their weapons. They give you a gun to carry; it feels good, you feel important. They even let you fire it a few times. You get involved in the fighting - you're hooked!

But it's not only the fighting you're hooked on. Without your knowledge they've been feeding you on gunpowder, an addictive substance which makes you *feel* brave. You go on a mission with the soldiers - soldiers, rebels, who knows the difference?

- and watch as they evoke terror into a group of village people. "These are the people responsible for killing your family", they say. Is it true? How can you tell? Your new 'friends' *must* know so it's not such a big step as, with the gun or a machete in your hand and all your anger and grief welling up, you cross the line. Now blood is on your hands too!



10 year old spies



Or maybe you're an eight year old playing outside your village when the rebels attack. You run to hide in the bush and cover there, listening to the terrible screams. Finally, as the darkness falls, the only thing you can hear is the silence. Terrified, you creep back into the village finding dead bodies strewn around, and people with horrific injuries. Some are from your family, all are people you know, neighbours, friends. Some are dead; others no longer have some of their limbs, just bleeding stumps.

You can't find your parents so you go with some of the others, leaving the village, because they say the rebels may come back again soon. You walk off with them,

leaving your home and all that is familiar behind, and eventually arrive in the capital city - a strange and forbidding place!

At least it seems safe there but, with no one to care for you, not knowing whether your parents are alive or dead, you have to live on the streets, in a gang, using your wits and stealing just to survive. Is this how life is supposed to be? Why is this happening to me?

Just the stuff of nightmares....?

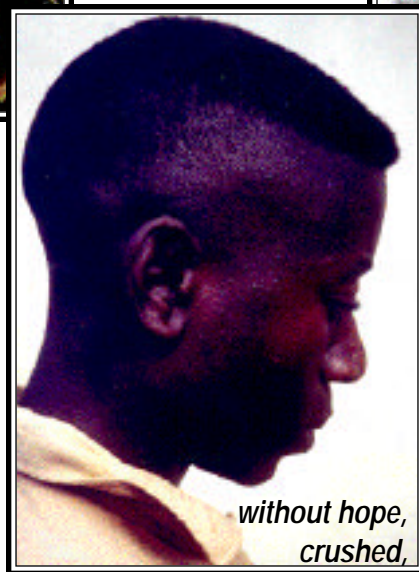
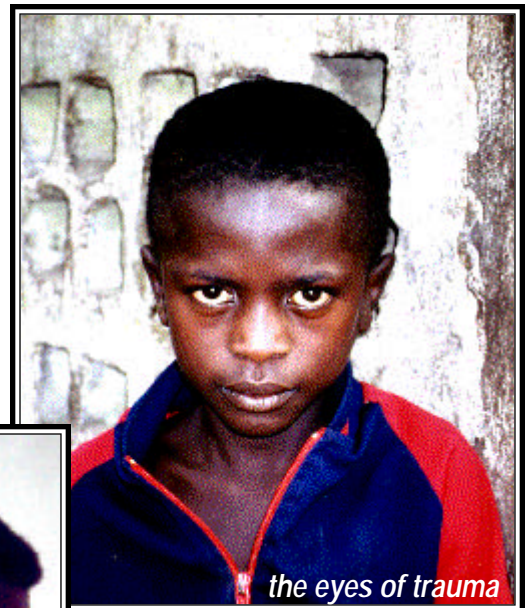
These are just a sample of the real experiences of children now roaming the streets of the capital city, Freetown, and other cities and towns of Sierra Leone.

They have their nightmares and, not surprisingly, demonstrate many behavioural problems as they seek to come to terms with the awful brutality and deprivation that they have been exposed to in such short lives.

But without help these children will not only be a continuing threat to society, but will in turn themselves become the parents of another lawless generation.



*Faces etched with
the awful truth!*



*without hope,
crushed,
broken...*

"A second war front has opened; to rescue a generation that cannot be incorporated into normal society. Young boys who live on the street are violent, lost and without any hope unless someone shows them love and care"

Richard Cole

Explaining the Vision

A native of Sierra Leone, Richard Cole of LifeLine West Africa Indigenous Ministries (LWAIM) represents LifeLine Network International (LNI) in West Africa. Beginning around 1994, whilst still living in his own home in the town of Waterloo, just outside Freetown, he had started to reach out to some of the desperate young people he encountered each day on the streets in the city. There grew up what can only be described as an extended family.

In 1996, based on their knowledge of the work he was doing, Richard was approached by the Sierra Leone government with the proposal that he set up a rehabilitation project for children traumatised by the war. On behalf of LNI he accepted the challenge and was given the long term lease for the school building, on the eastern outskirts of Freetown, where the Nehemiah Project is now established.

Currently the Nehemiah Project accommodates 140 children, but there are thousands of children throughout the country who need rehabilitation. We expect to replicate the Nehemiah Project throughout Sierra Leone, as finance and resources are released and, as the locally recruited staff gain skills and knowledge in this field, that they will train others to staff the additional units.

The Nehemiah Project seeks to integrate general education and vocational training within a structure designed to encourage responsible, socially-adjusted behaviour, whilst addressing the underlying problems of grief, fear, guilt and depression.

Rising out of the success of the Nehemiah Project, and resulting from the destruction caused during the conflict, the Kuntorloh Community School has been birthed. This facility, which is closely linked with the rehabilitation programme, provides basic primary education for some 700 children. All these children live in the local community, mostly in the camp for displaced families.

The Project aims to.....

- ***Provide a stable and loving environment*** for children seriously affected by war;
- ***Counter the effects of trauma*** in these children through appropriate counselling and behaviour modification;
- ***Provide basic education***;
- ***Provide vocational training***;
- ***Build self-controlled, responsible young adults***, enabling these children to be reintegrated into the community with life skills;
- ***Reunite these children with their families***, where these can be traced, or integrate them into other stable home situations where possible.

Telling the History

The school building that was given to LNI, on a long term lease by the government of Sierra Leone, is set on the outskirts of the Kissy suburb of Freetown. Until 1996 it was in use as a secondary school. It is surrounded by sufficient land for agriculture, recreation and subsequent expansion, and will be secured with a perimeter wall. Building work had been completed during the summer of 1998, but the rebel uprising in January 1999 caused setbacks.



Since then the whole complex has developed beyond all recognition, becoming a nationally and internationally recognised centre of excellence for the rehabilitation of war traumatised people.

The Unfolding Events

September 2000:

More than 140 children are now involved in the rehabilitation programme.
Over 700 children enrolled at Kuntorloh Community School for the beginning of the new term.
The LifeLine Business Training Institute opens in Lungi offering a wide range of courses to local people and ex-combatants.

February 2000:

First group of ex-combatants engaged in Stage 3 of the rehabilitation process, being re-integrated into community family situations.
Full complement of academic staff recruited for Kuntorloh Community School.
Vocational skills training fully operational.
Adult literacy courses started.
Media exposure in local Freetown press.

October 2000:

Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund awards substantial grant for continued work of project and new developments.
The LifeLine Agricultural Training Institute is set up in the Lungi area to offer re-training to ex-combatants, in association with the National Council for Demobilisation, Disarmament & Rehabilitation (NCDDR) programme.

May 2000:

The number of child ex-combatants at the centre has now risen to over 100. As the project gains momentum, so its success raises the profile nationally and internationally, and more young people are seeking help!

March 2000:

Container received from UK including a minibus, to be used to generate income, and a large generator, providing power for the entire complex.

January 2000:

Project base used by ex-combatants for surrendering weapons which are then turned over to UNAMSIL. Generator, computer and typewriters donated to local police station to replace equipment destroyed in fighting.

December 1999:

CD of music, written and performed by staff and boys of the Nehemiah Project, produced in UK for sale internationally.

November 1999:

Two containers of relief goods, medical supplies, generators and other equipment received from UK.

April 1999:

Project approved by the Child Protection Committee in Freetown, a governing body for all projects dealing with children. Richard Cole invited by committee, whose members include UNICEF, to be on taskforce setting out policy for care of street children and demobilised child soldiers.

UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) awards substantial grant to replace losses and damage caused by January uprising.

March 1999:
Project featured in Special Reports on BBC 9 o'clock news programme.

March 1999++:

Extensive media exposure on TV and radio, in newspapers and magazines.

February 1999:

With the re-establishment of peace, work at school starts again. It is one of the few buildings left intact following rebel attacks. One news report estimates 500 homes destroyed in Waterloo area. Boys and staff now back in school. All equipment looted; animals lost; crops destroyed; building stripped of doors and window frames, and anything else that could have been burnt.

Not Defeated, but Expanding: Once again the community has to start from scratch. Although they lost everything, Richard and Yeakah Cole chose to reach out rather than step back. The school is now open during the day to children in the community for basic education and help. The boys become positive force in community, helping others whilst continuing their education. Responding to local needs, Kuntorloh Community School is set up to provide primary schooling for over 250 children from displaced families.

January 1999:

RUF attack Freetown. News reports state many thousands of civilians killed during six weeks of rebel occupation of Waterloo, the nearby town. Rebels indiscriminately mutilate people, cutting off hands and arms, raping women and young girls, killing others. City under siege; nobody safe to leave their home; water and food in scarce supply.

Nehemiah boys evacuated at night to safe houses, then scattered as rebels burn down whole streets in Waterloo area. All 60 boys survive the ordeal; Richard Cole finds them and takes them to safety in his own home in centre of Freetown. For a month, 150 live together in his four bedroomed apartment!

Phase Five

February 1998:

Peace established; children return to Freetown; education and training recommences. Two containers arrive from UK with essential tools, clothing and other equipment. Repairs are carried out on buildings; roof is finally completed. School now ready to accommodate 66 boys.

Phase Four

November 1997:

Emergency intake of 6 boys, during May-November rebel coup. School running on minimal staff. Residents boys taken to safe hiding place in latter months as rebel forces keen to interrogate them. Later move to Conakry, Guinea, where project continues until early 1998.

Phase Three

April 1997:

First intake of 5 boys enter the school.

Phase Two

February - April 1997:

Staff recruited, trained and deployed to provide:

- ◆ management & security;
- ◆ basic education in Maths & English;
- ◆ vocational skills training in:
 - building;
 - electrics;
 - carpentry;
 - agriculture;
 - animal husbandry;
 - tailoring.



*the main buildings
in the early days*



Phase One

September 1996 - February 1997

Premises renovated and secured to provide accommodation for first intake of boys, plus necessary supervisory and security staff. On-site catering, washing and toilet facilities provided.

STORIES & PICTURES

Once enemies...

The village where he lived was attacked by rebels and as Nasiru, then 15, tried to escape he fell into a Kamajor Militia ambush. He convinced them wasn't a rebel and was allowed to live, as a prisoner. Alhaji Coker, then 10 and known as 'Little Ecomog', was assigned to look after him, drilling him every morning and evening. When they met up in the Nehemiah Project, the past came back and Nasiru told the story of his experiences in the hands of the younger boy. Amazingly they ***became best friends!***

Alhaji has since been re-united with members of his family.



Keeping the birds at bay!

Musa keeps watch over the garden. He and his mum were captured by rebel soldiers when he was only eighteen months old. His mother died soon after and Musa was brought up by the rebels, who trained him as a fighter.

Arriving at the Nehemiah Project violent and hostile, sporting a large knife for protection, he became a fully integrated member of the community there, benefitting from the opportunity of learning how to develop good relationships.

Musa has now been re-united with a member of his own family.

Papany, a little boy who lost his parents during the war. He came to Freetown, from Sherbo Land, with a family friend who brought him to the Nehemiah Project.



Stories & Pictures

Ibrahim & Adama were abandoned by their mother who has not been heard of since 1994. Their soldier father, after serving with the ECOMOG forces in Liberia, had joined the rebels in Sierra Leone at that time. Because of this the children suffered from rejection by their community and lived in deplorable conditions. Richard Cole took Ibrahim into the Nehemiah Project but, since there was no direct provision for girls at the time, Adama was 'adopted' into one of the LifeLine foster homes.

During the January '99 invasion the children's father was seen leading fighters in the storming of Richard Cole's former residence, in Waterloo, demanding his

head. They terrorised the residents even though they were told he no longer lived there. Amazingly, some months later, the same man came to Richard Cole asking for his forgiveness, and is now involved in the work of the project!



Timothy is a former child soldier who, having lost his parents during the war, fought with the NPFL for seven years. He was abducted by the rebels when he was just 9 years old, and trained to fight. Two years later he managed to escape into Guinea, where he met Richard Cole at Gaigadu. He is the most senior boy in the Nehemiah Project, and describes the worst moments of his life, the ones he regrets the most, as those when he was forced to kill!

From thief to trustee, his main interest is in agriculture, but he is also now a trusted member of the project staff with responsibility for the stores.

Amansa lost his father during the war and migrated to Freetown with his mother. Separated from his mother during the January '99 rebel uprising, he returned to their home in the east end of the city once a calm had been established, only to find it completely destroyed. He has not seen his mum since!

Amansa lived at the National Stadium with thousands of other people for several weeks, managing to survive by begging on the streets. He was discovered by Richard Cole and brought into the Nehemiah Project. He is now a very effective, active boy in the home.

STORIES & PICTURES

Maxwell is a very promising young man whose future potential was once marred by very unfortunate circumstances. Having lost his father as a young infant, he grew up with his mother until, when he was just 5 years old, she left for the USA. His mother eventually re-married in the States but never told her new husband about her son in Africa. Maxwell was fostered by an aunt but, when he was 11, she decided to take up an opportunity to travel to Europe, leaving him to fend for himself.

Due to his own natural academic aptitude Maxwell was granted a scholarship by a school and in 1998 graduated from High School. Following graduation, however, his circumstances took a knock and he ended up living in one of the city's ghetto areas. Richard Cole found him there and took him into the Nehemiah Project where he learnt a skilled trade and also helped teach the nursery class.

Once branded a thief, stealing to survive, he became a trusted member of the staff, sharing with Timothy responsibility for the school's stores and equipment. More recently Maxwell has moved over

to the Lungi district of Freetown where he is now acting as caretaker at the LifeLine Business Training Institute - a new self-financing development that offers training in business and computer studies. When he's not working at the institute, he's studying to improve his prospects for the future!



Sylvester, known as "**AK 47**", was 17 years old when he finally escaped from the rebels to the nearest ECOMOG base. Having seen his mother shot in the head during an horrific attack on their home in Kono, escaping into the bush, he was later captured by the rebels and forced to carry their loads. Eight months later he made his escape into ECOMOG hands and, after explaining his ordeals to them, he was taken into Freetown. There he spent his life as a street hawker until 1998, when he was brought to the Nehemiah Project by Sierra Leone Government Authorities.

Since his father was killed earlier and he also lost his brother during the attack on their village, there is no indication that any of his family are still alive, but Sylvester now has a significant role in the Nehemiah Project caring for the younger children there, whilst also pursuing his school studies!

Stories & Pictures

Civilian, as he is called, real name **Sulaiman**, is the blue-eyed boy of not only his peers but the entire staff and church family of LifeLine. He was only 4 years old when, having had to watch as his parents were murdered, he was abducted by a group of RUF rebels and then taught to fight and kill. Under the influence of drugs he was forced to kill his own grandparents and many others, chopping off limbs and hands under instruction. When asked how many people he has killed and how many hands he has chopped off he'll reply, *"I don't know the number of people I've killed but I remember killing many times, and cutting off hands many times. Once I had 51 hands I carried in my sack"*. Why did he carry them? Those were his instructions! What kind of gun did he use? He'll tell you it was an AK58.

Civilian's life has been gradually transformed from being wild and almost uncontrollable, to one of a more gentle nature. He was brought to the Nehemiah Project by his elder sister, the only other known survivor from the family - she couldn't cope with him any more. He's now learning carpentry and being educated at the Kuntorloh Community School.

Sylvester, known as **"Kamajor"**, was forced to watch as his parents were brutally murdered, and made to laugh as it happened. He was then abducted by the RUF and trained as a soldier, to fight and to kill. When asked, "How many people have you killed?", he replied, *"So many I can't tell exactly"*. In reply to a question asking why he killed in the first place he says, *"I was forced to and if I refused I would be killed too"*.

Sylvester escaped from the rebels in 1994 and joined the Kamajor Society, a militia group that believed in mystical powers capable of making bodies resistant to bullets and machetes. Because of his previous involvement, Sylvester was able to help the Kamajors dislodge the rebels from many of their hide-outs. In 1998, after 4 years with the Kamajors, he went into Freetown with a friend and was finally discovered in a 'displaced people' camp. He was directed to the Nehemiah Project where he is now training to be a tailor, and pursuing his academic career at the Kuntorloh Community School. He's in the last stages of primary education and is expected to take the national examination this year.

How did he feel when killing people? *"Well initially I felt restraint and guilt because I was forced to kill innocent civilians but when I escaped from the rebels and joined the Kamajors I enjoyed killing rebels because they killed my parents"*.



STORIES & PICTURES

Morning Assembly



Rescued from the conflict



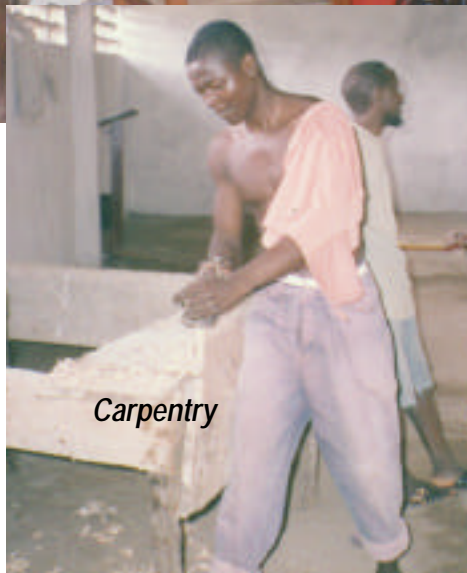
A little girl waits patiently as her new clothes are being sewn. She and her family lost everything when rebels burned their home in January '99.

Tailoring



Production not Destruction

Carpentry



Animal Husbandry

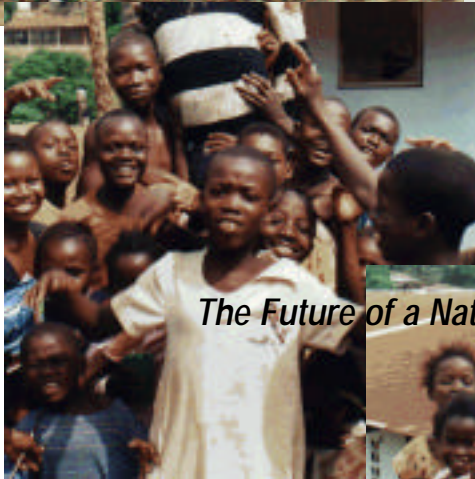


Stories & Pictures

The Project Base



Lives Rebuilt



The Future of a Nation



Kuntorloh
Community
School



School is in



The Staff
&
Their Families



STORIES & PICTURES

*New beginnings...
the nursery school*



Basics in Building



*...the proposed Community
Health Post*



toilet block



shower block

the new generator house



kitchen garden



Out of Conflict...



friends & brothers

And finally...

a new Civilian



...a New Hope

Counting the Cost

Once regarded as the jewel of Africa, due to its abundance of natural resources and a favourable climate, Sierra Leone is now, as a result of civil war and a succession of unstable governments, counted amongst the poorest countries in Africa.

Several African nations are having to face the consequences of involving children in war. We recognise it is not enough to simply meet the needs of those involved, but to work towards seeing the end of this practice altogether. These countries are having to cope with a lawless and despairing generation. Your assistance in this project could be part of the solution, seeking to rebuild the lives of these children. This is an ideal opportunity for your organisation to be identified with one of the most desperate issues of today.

This is an opportunity to be involved in a project which is under government scrutiny. Your participation would secure attention across a wide spectrum of West African life, as well as doing immeasurable good.

Overall Capital Costs

Transport is required to enable workers to travel easily into rural areas as part of the re-settlement programme for the children who are ready to leave the Nehemiah Project.

£10,000

Running Costs

The rehabilitation project now has over 140 children in its care. In addition to the necessary counselling, they are provided with basic educational and vocational skills training. The primary day school now has over 700 children in attendance. Teaching, supervisory and training staff have been recruited locally.

Annual costs for staff salaries

Nehemiah Project

£24,960

Kuntorloh Community School

£16,800

Annual running costs

Nehemiah Project

£44,160

Kuntorloh Community School

£4,956

Monthly costs for both projects

(including administration, fuel for transport, maintenance for buildings and equipment, and assessment visit travel)

£8,500

(Full details of the budget breakdown can be made available on request)

Richard Cole: a biography

A native of Sierra Leone, Richard Cole, pictured below with his wife, Yeakah, and his son PJ, has worked for many years in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Whilst based in Liberia, Richard was involved in setting up orphanages, clinics, schools, churches and a farm. During the '80's he worked successfully with displaced young people, often with minimal support and resources, and based in his own home. Forced to flee Liberia during the civil war there, Richard had to abandon everything and is now based in Freetown, Sierra Leone.



Richard is committed to seeing his own country grow and prosper now that peace has been established following the end of the civil war. He has strong links with the national government, which recognises and respects the work he has already done in terms of helping those made destitute by war, despite his own personal hardships.

Together with his team of dedicated full time and part time staff, he is currently and successfully caring for over 140 young people who have been traumatised by war, and it is in light of this that the Sierra Leone government has invited him to lead this project, with the help of LifeLine Network International. He also oversees the work of the Kuntorloh Community School which provides primary education for more than 700 children from displaced families in the area.

Why Nehemiah?

Nehemiah was a biblical character who undertook the task of repairing the walls of war-torn and ruined Jerusalem. Our local partners, LifeLine West Africa Indigenous Ministries, have coined this name for the project as, to them, it is a symbol of the repairing of the war ravaged nation of Sierra Leone.

Educational Programme

Project Activities:

- 1 Teaching basic English and mathematics.
- 2 Training in vocational skills of agriculture, carpentry, masonry and tailoring.
- 3 Behaviour modification; using techniques to help modify learned behaviour of violence, self-reliance and survival.
- 4 Counselling, both on a one-to-one basis and in groups.

Specific Aims for the First Year for Each Child:

- 1 To ensure each child can read and write.
- 2 To ensure each child has some basic skill in agriculture.
- 3 To ensure each child has at least one specific vocational skill which could be offered to an employer at an appropriate stage, depending on age.
- 4 To see each child no longer functioning from a basis of violence and survival, but to be able to:
 - u take responsibility for the maintenance of their own clothing and equipment.
 - u taking responsibility, as appropriate depending on age, for the 'life of the community', including feeding and caring for livestock, cleaning and maintenance.
 - u show care and concern for other members of the community.
 - u resolve conflicts in a peaceful and rational manner.

Specific Aims by the end of the Second Year for Each Child:

- 1 To see each child re-integrated into their own community/village, where possible, or part of the community in Freetown.
- 2 To see each child able to function and live harmoniously in their own family unit, where possible, or an adopted one.
- 3 To see each child integrated into mainstream schooling or, depending on age, successfully employed.

LifeLine Network International

LifeLine Network International (LNI) has been in operation since the mid-80's, under the names of Community Resources and LifeLine Ministries, as the "overseas arm" of LifeLine Community Church. It was established as a charity in its own right in 1997. LNI also incorporated Global LifeLine Literature, a charity which had been established in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique since the mid-80's as a relief organisation.

What does LNI do and who benefits?

LNI is involved in helping churches reach out to provide relief and help to their communities. It provides leadership training, literature and finance for relief projects to help alleviate poverty and suffering in areas where churches are established. The geographic areas of involvement are southern and western Africa, eastern Europe and the Caribbean.

Relief projects to date include:

- u Providing transport to local pastors in Zimbabwe.
- u More than 70 containers of clothing and essential medical supplies to Mozambique, Guinea and Sierra Leone, in the last 10 years.
- u Computers for schools in Zimbabwe.
- u Wells and boreholes in Zimbabwe.
- u Building toilets near schools and communities in Zimbabwe.
- u Supporting local churches during famine/difficulties in Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Botswana, Latvia and the Caribbean.

LNI's Track Record

LNI works through indigenous church leaders and individuals and so reaches the heart of the community in a number of nations. There is clear communication and accountability between representatives in these countries for the money given for the projects. The Zimbabwe and Mozambique governments have registered LNI as a relief organisation and have used our goods (clothing and medical supplies) as part of their "official" relief distribution in times of crisis. The Zimbabwe government has also part-funded water and toilet projects in rural areas. Recently the Zimbabwe government transported computers LNI had been given free of charge from UK and distributed them in schools in rural areas.

The Trustees

John Singleton (*Director of LifeLine Network International*)

Ron Davies (*former Director of Global LifeLine Literature*)

David Jones

Lisa Webb

Gift Aid Declaration

LifeLine Network International Nehemiah Project

Registered Charity No: 1082553

Details of Donor

Title Forename(s) Surname

Address

.....

..... Post Code

I want the charity to treat

the enclosed donation of £

all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise

all donations I have made since 6th April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise

as Gift Aid donations

delete as appropriate

Signature Date/...../.....

See overleaf for notes

Notes

- 1 If your declaration covers donations you make in the future:
 - i please notify the charity if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force
 - i you can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity - it will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.
- 2 You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).
- 3 If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capitals gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).
- 4 If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further relief in your Self Assessment tax return.
- 5 If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 *Gift Aid*.