



Right Sharing of WORLD RESOURCES

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FIELD REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE: *Sallian in Sierra Leone*

Sallian Salimatu Sankoh has been the Field Representative for RSWR in Sierra Leone since 2014. She has a Bachelors degree in Development Studies and is a mother, a Methodist, and an advocate for women. She says “I learned in my role as Field Rep to be accommodating, a servant, respectful, cheerful, voice of the voiceless, a strong woman and advocator.”

Sallian explains that women in Sierra Leone experience inequity in access to birth control, a high maternal death rate, and sexual violence, particularly in rural areas. The country is still recovering from 11 years of civil war and the devastating ebola virus, which exacerbated the poverty and inequality of women. Sallian is passionate about making sure help of all kinds arrives to the rural women who need it most.

In a normal year Sallian will travel extensively to visit groups, do trainings, and assist with writing grant proposals. 2020 isn't a



Sallian training a women's self-help group.

regular year. Since Coronavirus arrived in Sierra Leone there has been an intra-district lockdown and not only did Sallian cease traveling for several months, but the women's business activities had to be paused. Now, the RSWR team in Sierra Leone has cautiously restarted activities. They were recently able to do in-person training and disburse the grants from the Spring 2020 cycle. For the Fall 2020 cycle, they will conduct site visits with social distancing. Providing our partners with information about the virus and needed hygiene supplies is part of Sallian's work. "In most of these communities," she says "women are ignorant of Corona and they have little knowledge of the virus."

Sallian explains her work: "My role is to specifically work with vulnerable women who are in deprived communities in the rural areas. I identify potential groups and assist them in developing proposals. I assess project activities and visit project sites. I monitor and evaluate projects. I recommend approval for funding. I also assist project beneficiaries to do their narrative and financial reports."

"Of the things I teach the women in the training, the aspect of savings is most important to me. . . . they should save for emergencies both in their business and for their families' welfare."

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Sallian Salimatu Sankoh

"LET US THEN SEE WHAT LOVE CAN DO." – William Penn, 17th Century Quaker

GOD CALLS US TO THE RIGHT SHARING OF
WORLD RESOURCES, FROM THE BURDENS
OF MATERIALISM AND POVERTY INTO THE
ABUNDANCE OF GOD'S LOVE, TO WORK FOR
EQUITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR
SISTERS AND BROTHERS THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD.

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The Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment harvesting their rice.

Savings is one thing that has supported the women through the intra-district lockdown. Also, The women's skills in business and familiarity with local supply chains were essential to keeping their communities fed. During the shutdown, RSWR partner women teamed up with motorcyclists and local farms to ensure the delivery of food and essential goods to their villages.

Sallian's Advice: "You should always be there to listen more and talk less. Be a modest person one cannot be afraid to come close to. Accept everyone no matter religion, tribe or race."



One of our partners in Sierra Leone at her housewares stand.

The Story of Jacqueline Obenda Imali: VUNANDI DIGITAL WOMEN GROUP IN KENYA

INTERVIEWED AND WRITTEN BY LOTAN MIGALIZA, TRAINER,
WITH PICTURES BY SAMSON ABABU, KENYA FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

"WHEN I MARRIED, I didn't know the challenges of being a female and a mother entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of my family," she said ruefully. "It became clear to me one evening when I was totally unable to provide a meal for the family — seeing my children playing in the compound unaware that they would have nothing for supper. I was troubled and traumatized."

Four years ago, Imali had no income of her own. Her husband was the only breadwinner in the family, with his small income as a construction laborer. She had the responsibility of making sure the family had food to eat, but she could not grow enough in the family garden to feed five children, her husband, and herself. The burden weighed heavily on her shoulders.

That day, when she realized she couldn't provide a meal for her children, she decided to start a business of her own, however small. But how was she going to get the capital?

When Vunandi Digital Women Group was formed, she enrolled as a member and attended training sessions on how to start a small business. The group initiated



Jacqueline Imali stands in front of her store where she sells many different items that her neighbors need.

a table banking activity, whereby the women each put in a small amount of money and the total was loaned to one or two women at a time to finance their small businesses. Imali was among the first to take a loan from the group. She started selling vegetables in the village. But the amount of money the group had to loan was small, so her business remained small. When RSWR gave a grant to Vunandi Digital Women Group, Imali saw an opportunity to expand her



Jacqueline in her backyard with one of her 5 children.

business. She took a first loan of ksh.20,000 (\$200) — and that was just the beginning!

Imali’s husband has been very supportive. Initially, he helped her build a small mud kiosk in their compound from which to sell her vegetables. Later, the couple decided to build a more permanent brick structure, making bricks from the soil in their backyard. Imali is now the proud owner of a permanent village shop, where she sells household items as well as vegetables and fruits.

Imali has cumulatively borrowed Ksh.60,000 (\$600) from her women’s group as her business has expanded. She used some of her savings to help pay for materials for building the shop. She rents out shop space to make extra income for her family. The soil taken to make the bricks has been replaced with compost manure for a beautiful banana plantation.

Imali credits her success to hard work, determination, being focused, and having the will to achieve. She also gives credit to her husband, who has been very supportive and has worked alongside her the entire time.



Jacqueline and her son check out the banana plantation.

Interview with our Partner Mrs. Anjala

MRS. ANJALA is 36 and is a member of Puthuyugam Trust in India. She and her husband have a son who is in his final year of college and a daughter who just completed her higher secondary education. Their family business is brick making and they have faced many challenges in running their business. Mrs. Anjala joined PT and started to save Rs.100 (\$1.35) per month, which she gradually increased to Rs.200 (\$2.70). When PT became a RSWR partner in 2018, she received her first loan from the RSWR fund. So far, she has received 3 loans, receiving a new one after paying back the previous one. This ability to have access to credit with a reasonable rate of interest has helped the family business a lot, as well as the business training she has received from PT.



WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE JUST GETTING STARTED WITH A BUSINESS?

Mrs. Anjala – Whatever you are making, make sure it has good quality. We learned that despite having several competitors in the same field, by producing quality bricks every time our business still thrived.

WHAT DIFFICULTIES DID YOU HAVE?

Mrs. Anjala – We have several competitors in brick making, so competition is always a challenge. During the rainy season we couldn’t make bricks and so we couldn’t do business. We didn’t have a place to store the bricks, so during the off season we could only sell the bricks that were already made. It was a challenge to take new orders and deliver on time. Finally, we were able to construct a shed to store 2 months’ worth of bricks.

HOW HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED?

Mrs. Anjala – Our business is growing and we now make around Rs.20,000 (\$269) per month. After seeing my growth in every way, 11 women from our village decided to join Puthuyugam Trust and are now benefitting from the revolving fund and various other activities. I feel very happy about that and their growth.



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GRATITUDE: REFLECTING ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT

At this moment, everyone is experiencing challenges as we learn new ways of being and adjust to losses. I have the blessing of hearing from our women partners in Kenya, India, and Sierra Leone, and from many of you as I virtually visit yearly meetings across the United States. The word that keeps coming up is gratitude. Gratitude for family, friends and community. Gratitude for sharing generously and caring for one another, even from a distance.

I am finding myself abundantly grateful for what is – both pain and compassion. For caring for each other – for going beyond individualism and scarcity to community and sharing. For the

outward conflicts that create opportunities to go deeper and understand myself, each other and the system in new ways. For the hope of transformation to a new way of being in relationship that honors and respects human life and the ecology of the earth.

Thank you for your part in this journey. For reaching out to over 2500 women with emergency food aid in May and June. For continuing to partner with our sisters and brothers to work for equity throughout the world.

With God's abundant love,

Jackie



RIGHT SHARING OF WORLD RESOURCES
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