

## **The Current Role of the St George Foundation**

Over the last few months, my friends who run our residential children's home near Freetown, Sierra Leone have witnessed the terrible effects of the Ebola virus, affecting families and communities all around them. The Ebola crisis has left hundreds of children innocent victims, many have lost their parents, have been rejected by their extended families and their communities through fear of Ebola, leaving them alone, scared and with nowhere to go. Some parents are refusing to go to treatment centres or hospitals once recognising they have symptoms of Ebola because they fear no-one will take care of their children.

Our charity, the St George Foundation helps these children.

As we are one of the very few children's homes with experienced staff and facilities, UNICEF and the Sierra Leone government have asked us to be their public interface, in a very large area called Western Rural, which has a population size of approximately 200,000.

We have 3 primary functions;

1. to educate the people to help stop the spread of Ebola.
2. to monitor, report and deal with all cases of child orphans and child welfare issues in the area.
3. to run an interim care centre for children (babies, children, teenagers), providing a 3 - 6 week recovery programme, which costs approx £200 per child.

We have a group of willing volunteers and the capacity for 100 children at a time but we are struggling to meet the costs.

To date we have 500+ registered orphans in our area.

We have had to create our own emergency quarantine area as a result of when a child whom we had taken in started showing symptoms of Ebola. Also, my co-founder has recently moved to be at the centre full-time after having sent her own children away to live with her mother, as the risks are too great.

Here is a bit of information about a few of the children the St George Foundation is helping.

**Name: Mohamed K. Age - 15yrs**

**"I am the head of the family, if I live to see my grandchildren I will tell them the history about Ebola virus disease and how it destroys our family in the year 2014"**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 Mohamed's father died of Ebola. Their house was then quarantined for more than 21 days and during this period he lost 22 of his relatives, including his mother. When he was released from quarantine he was taken to the St George Foundation for care, support and family tracing and reunification.

**Name: Sylvanus F.                      Age - 8 yrs**

Sylvanus is an Ebola orphan. His uncle died of Ebola in September 2014 and they were quarantined for 21 days. During the quarantine period both his parents and the other nine (9) members of his family died. After he was released from quarantine he was taken to St G F interim care centre.

**Name: Fatima K.                      Age - 6 yrs**

After Fatima's grandmother died, she was taken to a holding centre with her mother and step father for testing and treatment. Both her parents died there but when Fatima's test for Ebola was negative UNICEF referred her to the St George Foundation.

**Name: Sinnah G.                      Age - 5 yrs**

Sinnah lost 13 members from her family including her father and mother due to Ebola, their house was quarantine for 42 days. Those who showed signs and symptoms of Ebola were taken to hospital but they were rejected because of no empty space in the hospital. In all 13 people died in the quarantine home. After she was released from the quarantine home, she was taken to St.George Foundation.

**Name: Mohamed G.                      Age - 4yrs**

Mohamed is an Ebola orphan. His father was the first one in their family to show signs of Ebola and their house was quarantine for 42 days because there were many suspected cases in their compound. During the quarantine period, another 13 members of his family died including his mother. After being released from the quarantine home, Mohamed was taken to St.George Foundation.

**Name: Alimamy K.                      Age - 12 yrs**

According to Alimamy they were living in one big happy family until the Ebola outbreak set them apart, it killed all the ones who were supposed to look after the young ones. After the death of his father their house was quarantined for more than 21days and during the quarantine period he lost 22 of his relatives including his mother due to Ebola Virus. After he was released from quarantine he was taken to the St. George Foundation.

**Name: Julius B.                      Age - 13yrs**

Julius came from Mokoedae village for a holiday to his aunty (Hawanatu) who died of Ebola in Freetown. The house was quarantined for 21 days. While in quarantine he was sick and he was taken to the Caughnout hospital for the Ebola lab test. The result was negative but when he returned home the community people rejected him because they said it is impossible for his aunty to die of Ebola and he stays alive negative. Alone, he was roaming the streets of Freetown when he was found and then referred to the St George Foundation.

If you could help us help more children like these, click on the link below

[www.justgiving.com/swanmore-primary-school](http://www.justgiving.com/swanmore-primary-school)