

A black and white photograph of a woman in a patterned dress and headwrap carrying a young child on her back. They are standing in front of a rustic building with a corrugated metal roof. The image is overlaid with large white text.

20

freedom  tree

IMPACT REPORT

18



Transition

Transition is often referred to as the most difficult stage in childbirth.

It is the stage where labour seems to be at its most intense, shortly before a woman begins to actively push out her child. Despite being the shortest phase, it is often the most confusing. At the end of transition, a woman must completely surrender to the forces of childbirth in order to bring the baby out into the world.

Early 2018, I began the personal transition of running Freedom Tree full time.

With that transition came the promise of birth, the end of labour, and into a place of surrender. In that place we, at Freedom Tree, have a new modus operandi where we can exist in the tension of an incomplete vision but still remain at rest knowing that though the vision seems slow in coming, we wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.

In the pages of this impact report, we share with you some of those stories that highlight the season of transition.

Omotara Johnson

Chief Caretaker
Freedom Tree

Our Birthing Clinics

Our most recent clinic is built in the northernmost province of the country, Koinadugu, close to the border of Guinea.

IT WILL SERVE

13

COMMUNITIES

APPROXIMATELY

& 40000

PEOPLE

Imagine being in labour, needing medical attention and proceeding to call an ambulance, knowing that it would be at least 20 hours before you could receive the medical attention you need.

Our first and second clinics continue to save lives. Prior to its existence, there would be at least one woman who died giving birth each month in the communities. At the time of writing, 1600 healthy babies have been born since 2014 at these clinics without a single case of maternal death recorded.



The Next Generation

Freedom Tree has always been focused on the next generation. Our vision is to provide a platform from which they are free to become who they were born to be.

Here are the stories of two little girls, one from Canada and another from Sierra Leone.

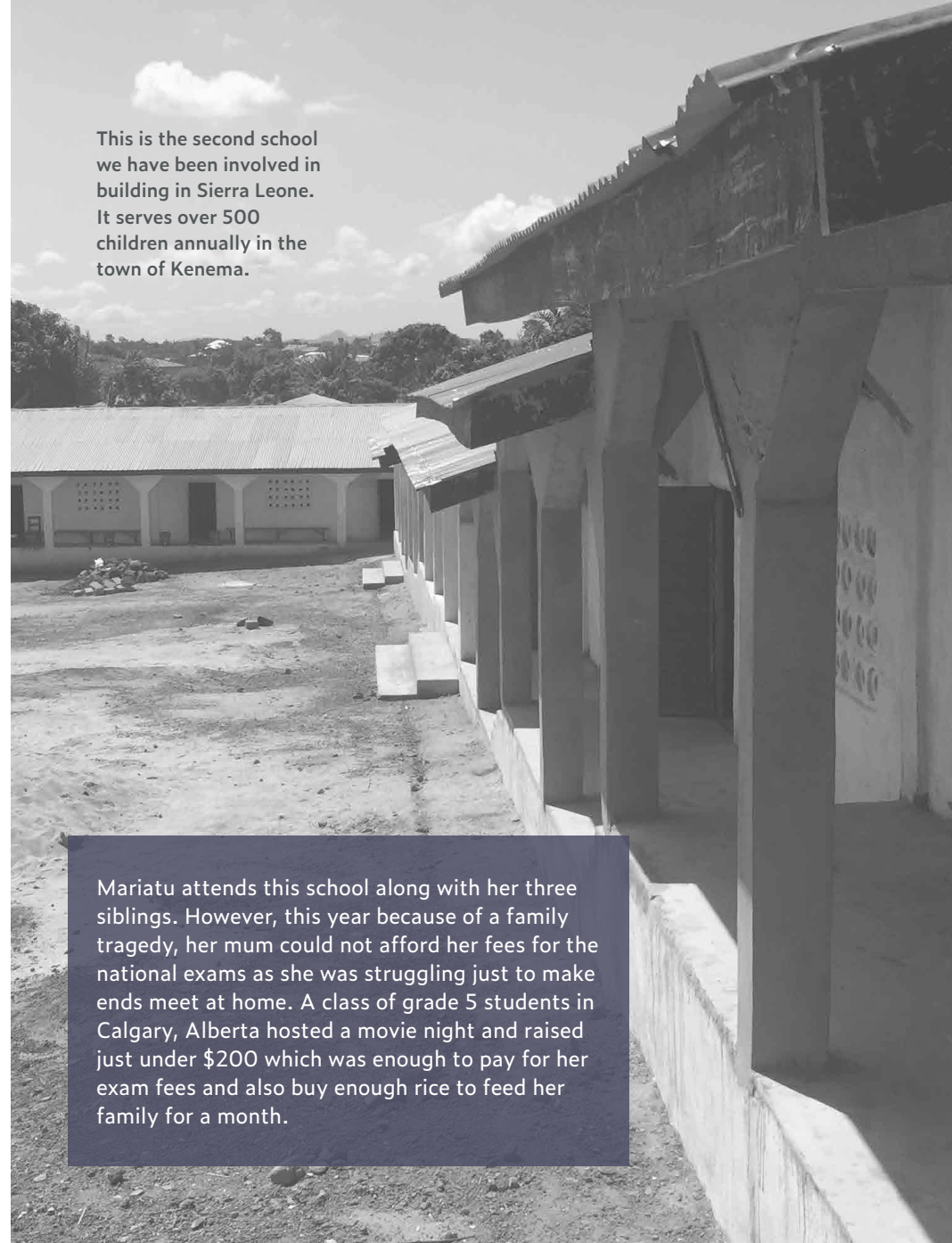
***Allegra** inspired by Freedom Tree decided she wanted to support children her own age in Sierra Leone. She made some art pieces and sold them in her community, raising a total of \$750.*



*Her donation supported **Fatmata**, one of our scholarship recipients. Fatmata is encouraged by the support she is receiving. For her, the access to education is a game changer. She is able to dream of a future where she is not limited by literacy.*

Kenema School

This is the second school we have been involved in building in Sierra Leone. It serves over 500 children annually in the town of Kenema.



Mariatu attends this school along with her three siblings. However, this year because of a family tragedy, her mum could not afford her fees for the national exams as she was struggling just to make ends meet at home. A class of grade 5 students in Calgary, Alberta hosted a movie night and raised just under \$200 which was enough to pay for her exam fees and also buy enough rice to feed her family for a month.



5
Years
Old!

You may remember baby Tara.

She was the first of many miracle births since we began working in Sierra Leone. She was born healthy after her mother had suffered six stillbirths. She turned five in 2018 and has started school. She loves attending school and learning to write. She is a constant reminder of what could be, and how far we have come. She was conceived when Freedom Tree was born and was born when Freedom Tree had just been established.

“Impossible
situations
can
become
possible
miracles.”

— Robert H. Schuller



Curriculum

Who would have thought that a simple pre-natal curriculum would have so much impact?

The 10-week program is delivered by local volunteers in various communities around the country to both men and women. It fosters an environment where people can talk openly about sensitive issues surrounding pregnancy and birth. We continue to receive stories weekly of how much this simple tool is changing mindsets and lives.

Radical Transparency

From the onset we have endeavoured to be open about our journey. It is one of the values we have built Freedom Tree on: Radical Transparency. Transparency in our programs, our journey, our finances. Because of that value, we will always choose to share with you all our stories, even those that may seem less positive.

Last year, three of our girls in the scholarship program had unplanned pregnancies. It had a severe impact on them and on ourselves as we worked to find a way to support them. Unfortunately, one of the babies died suddenly at just two months old. We knew the other two babies may meet the same fate if we did not intervene early on. Thanks to some generous donors, we were able to support the girls with additional education support, like tutors, so their academic work would not suffer. We were also able to support them by providing much needed basic nutrition for the babies. We continue to learn as we delve into societal issues in Sierra Leone such as teenage pregnancy which is a large contributor to infant mortality. Freedom Tree was able to impact both generations – the mothers, to achieve qualifications which impacts their future families; the babies, a fighting chance in life.

WE OURSELVES –
FEEL THAT
WHAT WE ARE –
DOING – IS JUST
A DROP –
IN THE OCEAN –
BUT THE OCEAN
WOULD BE –
LESS
BECAUSE OF –
THAT –
MISSING DROP.
– MOTHER TERESA

The People Movement

13000

HOURS DONATED IN 2018 ALONE FROM VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers in Canada

Randy, Alejandro, Liz, Mobu, Sarah, Christine, Carolyn, Jordan, and Ellen.

Our volunteers in Sierra Leone

Sumaila, Kpaka, Sheku, Beahai, and countless others who are determined to carry the good news to the 4 corners of Sierra Leone letting them know birth is a beginning.

Jamestina and Annie

Staff on the ground facilitating our work.

Santa and Shodankeh

Your partnership is the difference maker for Freedom Tree. Without the umbrella of your organization, we may have been scorched too quickly in the difficult climate of the country.

You, our supporter

**Who has donated, encouraged, and joined the movement, thank you.
You are the movement that will bring the change we are looking for.**

Notable in Kind Donations



Terralog Technologies

For donating office and board room space so we had an office to work out of.



Crowdworthy

For donating graphic design services.



Mount Royal University, Faculty of Communications

For donating student time to create a communications plan.



Alberta College of Art and Design

For donating student talent to create a beautiful and engaging website and this impact report. Insun and Winnie, you were a joy to work with.



The Calgary Foundation

For the hours spent coaching and investing into the capacity of our organization and your never turning down a coffee meeting to 'pick your brain'.



Propellus

For your unwavering support by providing volunteers and teaching us to harness the power of volunteerism.

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