



Embassy of the United States of America

Public Affairs Office

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown

April 20, 2011

Contact: Mark Carr

Tel: 076 515 000

U.S. Funds Community-Based School and Agriculture Projects

United States Ambassador Michael S. Owen today signed grant agreements totaling more than USD 50,000 with 17 community organizations from seven districts: Bo, Bombali, Kailahun, Kenema, Moyamba, Port Loko, and Pujehun. These grants will finance the construction or renovation of classrooms, school libraries, and school furniture in rural areas. Funds will also support several village-level agricultural projects aimed at increasing cassava and rice production. Many of these projects were designed with the assistance of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, who helped identify local needs and worked with community groups to write funding proposals.

These initiatives are funded by the Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH) Program, which supports small, community-based projects. These projects are designed in cooperation with community members, who contribute their own resources, usually in the form of labor and in-kind donations. Each project is a true partnership wherein Sierra Leoneans and their American counterparts work in tandem to create lasting, beneficial change based on communities' own development priorities.

Ambassador Owen congratulated the grantees and said "I know that many of you have traveled far to attend this ceremony--- and I hope to repay the favor someday soon by coming to visit your successful projects."

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund (SSH) is a grass-roots assistance program that allows U.S. embassies to respond directly to local requests for small community-based development projects in African countries. For more information on the Ambassador's SSH program please visit <http://freetown.usembassy.gov/embgrantops.html>.