



ENHANCE-GSL

UNIVERSITIES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE: UNIMAK'S PERSPECTIVES (EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES)

FOURAH BAY COLLEGE
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INTRODUCTION

- University of Makeni (UNIMAK) is a private non-profit university in Northern Sierra Leone that was fully accredited on 14th August 2009 by the GOSL.
- Our aim is to demystify University Education: a university that serves as much as it teaches.



Introduction

- The University of Makeni, like any other university, has a threefold mandate: to teach, to research, and to provide community service.
- Yet, what sets UniMak apart is how seriously we take *community Engagement or service*.
- It is not just something we talk about; it is something we live and do every day.

- At Unimak, community service is not a slogan; it is part of our identity and our work.
- Our students and lecturers are not only in the classroom but also in the communities, empowering communities, helping to solve everyday challenges, and learning by doing and from the community itself.
- This approach helps students connect classroom learning to real-life challenges, thus challenging them to help make the world a better place when they have completed their studies.

- This presentation is a case study of one Department in the faculty of social sciences that truly lives the university's mission.
- The Department of Development Studies.
- Over the years, the department has built strong networks and relationships with local communities, especially villages like Bombali Bana, Makenkitha and Kathalla in the Safroko Limba Chiefdom of Bombali district.

WHY THESE COMMUNITIES?

- Proximity: to Makeni to stay connected, yet far enough to see what poverty looks like.
- Needs assessments showed that they were among the most deprived communities in the nearby villages.
- So we wanted to see what we could do as a university community, and that's where we felt called to act.

WHY THESE COMMUNITIES?

- Inspired by Sustainable Development Goal 1: *No Poverty*, we wanted to do something rather than talk about change, but to touch and change lives. We wanted to live it as a department and a university.

WHY THESE COMMUNITIES?

“These communities will help our students to feel poverty, live poverty, and study poverty at the feet of villagers”, Fr. Joseph A. Turay.

- To truly understand poverty, our students have to experience it, not from a textbook, but firsthand at the community level.







All students in the Department of Development Studies spend ten weeks in one of three villages during semester 1 (Sunday 4PM to Thursday 12:30)

- **Teach in the Primary or secondary school at either Bombali Bana or Kathalla in the mornings.**
- **Work with women or girls in the evenings on environmental sanitation, or awareness raising on teenage pregnancy, drug addiction or any contemporary issues.**
- **Games and sports activities, inter-village football competition**



Students are divided into 3 groups and stay within these three villages for 10 weeks



The University supports each group with two bags of rice — just enough to share meals and build solidarity with the people they served



Experiencing how communities survive with limited resources



WORLD HOPE



charity: water

MAKENKITA

VILLAGE HAS BEEN DECLARED OPEN DEFECCATION FREE



se maintain!

Sport Donations to the three communities

Football and Team Jerseys





Vice Chancellor Rev. Fr. Prof. J.A. Turay at a kickoff match in a community



At a football match, depiction of cross section of high authorities and students from UNIMAK



Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Year Two students spend two days practising PRA tools in the communities

An imaginary project is handed over to each group, and they are to submit a full report on all the tools they use to enter the community, including transect walk, Community Mapping, wealth ranking, seasonal calendars, FGDs, etc, in the villages











Teaching at The Makeni Correctional Centre

- **From 2019 to 2025, A handful of lecturers at Unimak who want a fair world have volunteered two hours a week teaching at the correctional centre with no pay.**
- **We have graduated over 100 inmates and correction officers with certificates in Entrepreneurship and community**

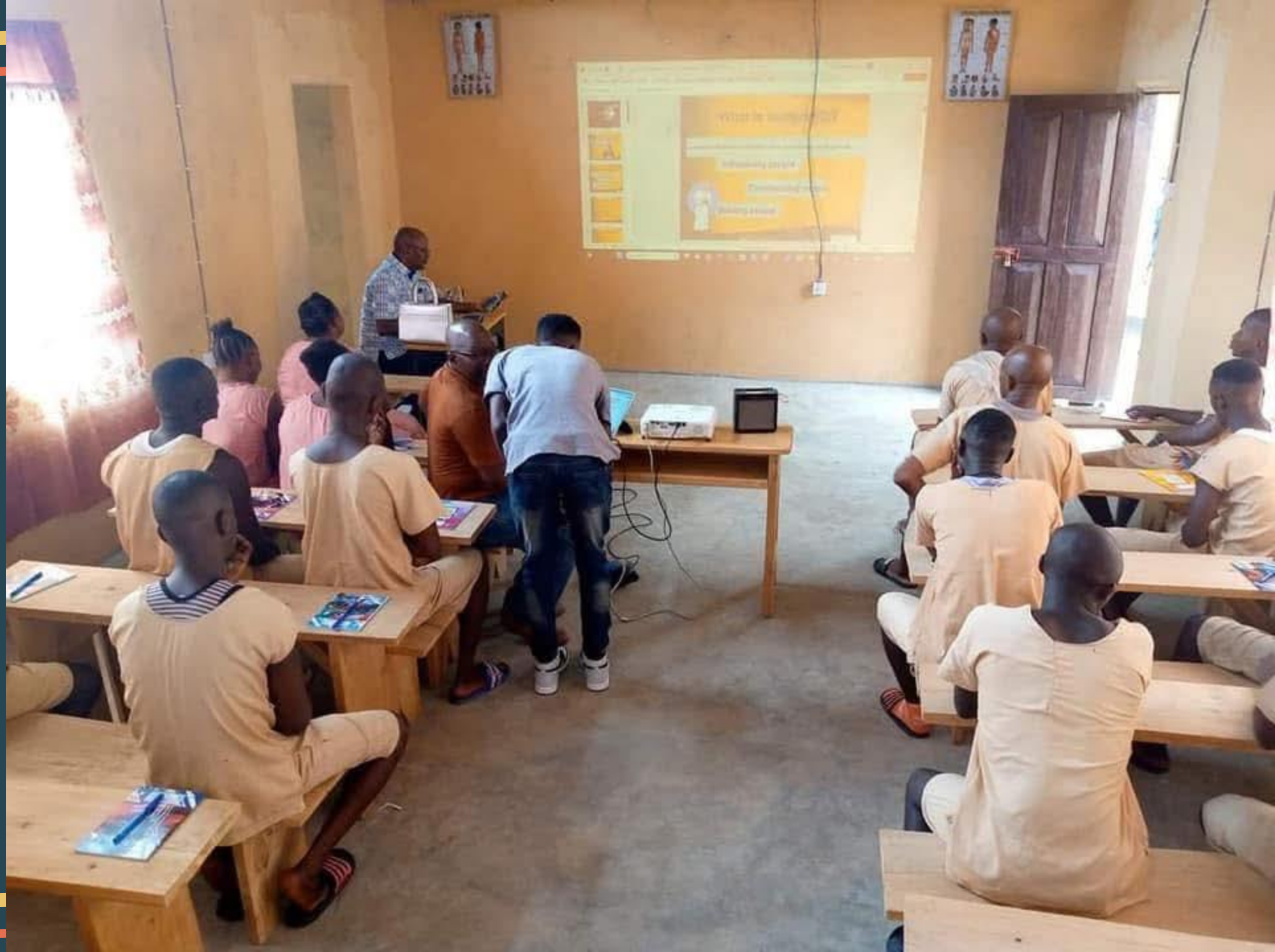


Teaching at The Makeni Correctional Centre

- **Cohort 1: 2020 (22: 17 inmates and five officers)**
- **Cohorts 2: 2024(25:20 inmates and five officers)**
- **Cohort 3:2025(53: 39 inmates and 14 officers)**



Inmates are
benefiting
from classes
using a
projector at
the
correctional
Centre







Programs of Community Intervention

	Donations & Recreational support	Empowerment of Teachers		Correctional Study Program	Civic Education engagement
Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
Description	Description	Description	Description	Description	Description
					

CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMUNITY CENTRE AT MAKENKITHA

- Students do not just go on Development tourism, but they leave sustainable and lasting impacts in communities















The constructed a community center in Makenkita, which now serves as a gathering space for three nearby villages.



CLOTHES DONATIONS: THEY ALSO
DO CLOTHES DONATIONS





Training of Three Teachers

Well, the most inspiring outcome was the three trainings of three UU local teachers: **Felix (HTC), Lansana(TC), and Moses(TC) from the three communities.**

- **They** were volunteer teachers; now they are back with qualifications from Unimak with no financial cost to them.

All three are now on the government payroll.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONAL LEADERS AT ELECTION TIME



**Charles Margai, PMDC President,
Flagbearer 2018**



**Dr, Julden Jalloh SLPP Vice Presidential
Candidate 2018**



**Dr. Kandeh Yumkella Presidential Flag bearer
NGC 2018**



11/12/2012

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THANK YOU



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ANY QUESTIONS

