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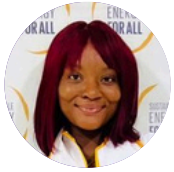
Government of Iceland
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EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Graduation Speeches from the
2024 STEM Traineeship Cohort





MARIAMA JALLOH

 SIERRA LEONE

Good morning, everyone.

It's a great honor to be here and to speak on behalf of my fellow STEM Trainees as we celebrate the progress young women are making in the energy sector.

Over the past eight months with Sustainable Energy for All, I've had the chance to grow, to contribute, and to understand the real impact we can make in our communities. Our journey has shown me the power of renewable energy and, equally, the power of empowering women in the energy transition.

One of the most memorable parts of my experience was working on a solar energy project at the York Village Community Health Center. We were able to install solar panels, bringing a reliable power source to the center for the first time. This project was truly an eye-opener as it taught me not only the technical skills involved in setting up a solar system but also the practical challenges and responsibilities that come with it. I saw how clean energy can make a prompt difference, allowing the health center to operate with fewer disruptions and providing better services to the people it serves.

Knowing that our work contributed to this change has made me even more committed to advancing renewable energy in Sierra Leone.

Another impactful project we're almost done working on is the solar energy initiative for the Kailahun Hospital. This is a project that will bring essential power to a critical healthcare facility, supporting everything from nighttime medical procedures to basic hospital functions. For the Kailahun community, this solar project will usher in an era of energy reliability to the hospital as it will now be up and running 24/7. This will improve healthcare for countless families and support the well-being of the entire region. Witnessing the difference these projects make has taught me that the energy transition is about much more than technology, it's about creating meaningful change where it's most needed.

These experiences have made a major impact on me. They've taught me not only the technical skills necessary to work in the renewable energy sector but also the value of leadership, teamwork, and resilience. Renewable energy, especially in places like Sierra Leone, comes with unique challenges. But through every challenge, I've gained confidence and skills that I know will shape my future in the energy sector.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to build on what I've learnt here. This program has given me a foundation in both the technical and community aspects of energy, and it's strengthened my commitment to pursuing a career that brings sustainable solutions to more communities. I'm now even more determined to continue working on projects that make energy accessible and equitable, especially for those who have been underserved.

I would like to close by saying thank you to Sustainable Energy for All, EM-ONE Energy Solutions and to everyone who made this program possible. You've given me and my fellow trainees more than just training, you've given us a platform, and a clear path towards a future where young women are leaders in the energy transition. And to the young women here today, I want to say your ideas, your passion and your voices are exactly what this sector need. We are not just participants in the energy transition; we are leaders in it.

Thank you.



SAMUELLA YAMBASU

 SIERRA LEONE

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak today.

My journey in the STEM Traineeship programme has been an incredible learning experience, filled with growth and a deeper understanding of renewable energy. Through this programme, we had the privilege of participating in significant projects, such as the solarization of healthcare facilities in Sierra Leone, where we installed hundreds of solar panels at hospitals and clinics, bringing sustainable energy to critical healthcare centers. This hands-on work taught me invaluable technical skills, including solar panel installation, energy management, and the intricacies of renewable energy technologies like battery storage and energy distribution. In addition to the technical skills, I developed critical soft skills that have been equally transformative.

Collaborating with professionals from diverse backgrounds has sharpened my teamwork and leadership abilities, particularly in decision-making under challenging circumstances. I also learned the importance of project management and adaptability, ensuring that every step we took was meticulously planned and executed for maximum impact. The programme emphasized clear communication, especially in community

engagement, allowing us to explain the value of sustainable energy to those we served and gaining their support for these projects.

Women's participation in STEM and the energy sector is essential, especially in regions like West Africa, where energy access can drastically change lives. Representation is crucial not only to bring new perspectives but to inspire young girls and women to see themselves in roles that influence technological advancement. Being part of this programme as a woman has empowered me, but it's also reminded me of the larger responsibility we have to pave the way for others. When women are part of the conversation, we're not just closing the gender gap; we're building a more inclusive and innovative future.

Looking ahead, my goal is to contribute further to the renewable energy sector. I plan to use the skills and insights from this traineeship to enhance sustainable energy solutions in Sierra Leone. My dream is to establish a renewable energy company focused on providing affordable, reliable energy, especially in rural areas, and to continue advocating for renewable energy education. I also hope to support the integration of renewable energy as a core subject in schools, inspiring the next generation to view

sustainability as both a personal commitment and a professional opportunity. Thank you again for this opportunity to share my journey.

The STEM Traineeship has not only shaped my career but solidified my commitment to renewable energy, and I look forward to contributing to a brighter, sustainable future for all.



AMIDA ADIATU BANGURA

 SIERRA LEONE

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Amida Adiatu Bangura, and I am honoured to share my experiences from the past six months as part of the SEforALL STEM Traineeship Programme. This journey has been invaluable in shaping both my career aspirations and my dedication to advancing sustainable energy in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone faces significant energy challenges, especially in rural communities and healthcare facilities, where unreliable grid systems can have life-or-death implications. Sustainable energy solutions, such as solar power, offer a viable path to bridging these gaps. My work with SEforALL has shown me firsthand the difference these solutions make and how renewable energy can be a catalyst for Sierra Leone's development.

Throughout the Powering Healthcare project, I had the opportunity to engage in hands-on and soft skills training that expanded my technical skills and understanding of renewable energy. I actively participated in installing solar systems at Kailahun Government Hospital, the only hospital site in this second phase of the project, and several community health centres across Freetown and Kailahun. My role spanned from the

initial work of building the footing for the ESS battery container, climbing rooftops to mount the panels and retrofitting and pre-commissioning of the site. These hands-on experiences allowed me to see the positive reception renewable energy has through conversations with healthcare workers, patients, and communities as a whole.

This traineeship has profoundly shaped my career goals and strengthened my foundation in the renewable energy sector. In addition to developing technical competencies, I gained a deeper understanding of essential energy-related topics, such as energy consumption, energy efficiency, and the importance of energy advocacy. These insights have clearly defined my future, as I am now looking to gain my master's in the renewable energy field and create my place in the energy sector.

Personally, this experience has taught me to see energy not only as a resource but as a lifeline that can provide an improved standard of living for communities. I found myself becoming more empathetic and aware of the challenges people face daily without reliable power, challenges that I may have taken for granted before. It struck me that each step we took in powering these facilities was not just about delivering energy but

about delivering security, hope and offering a safe space where patients especially women and children could receive care with ease.

I am incredibly grateful to SEforALL for this transformative experience. The skills, connections, and insights I've gained have prepared me to contribute meaningfully to the renewable energy sector.

To the decision-makers here today, I urge you to continue prioritising sustainable energy initiatives across the country. Beyond healthcare, consistent and clean energy opens doors to proper education, improved local economies and other development. These investments will help build a generation prepared to lead Sierra Leone forward.

I encourage other young people, particularly women to pursue opportunities in STEM and other sustainable development initiatives.

On behalf of my colleagues, I say thank you to SEforALL for this opportunity, and we look forward to continuing this journey toward achieving affordable and clean energy by 2030.

Thank you.