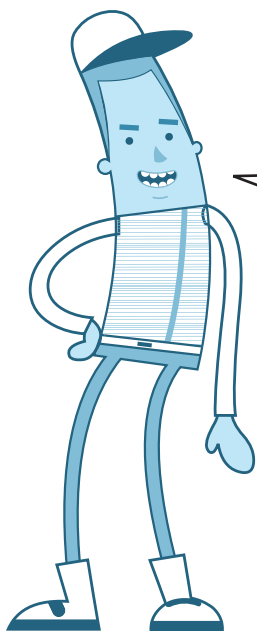


Name: _____



A problem shared

In Gbap, the village development committee comes up with good ideas to help the town solve its problems. In order to do this, the committee needs to listen to the opinions of lots of different groups, including different ages and religious groups.

If you were setting up a village development committee where you live, what problems would you want to solve?

Who would you invite to join the group? (Remember, the point is that you need to listen to the opinions of lots of different people in order to come up with a plan to improve life for everyone who lives there.)

My village development committee

I would talk to:

High hopes for Fatmata and Patricia

Names: Fatmata Jayah and Patricia Sawie

Ages: 13 and 12

Live: Gbap, Sierra Leone

Fatmata (in red vest) and Patricia (in pink/white vest) are best friends and they have big dreams for the future. Fatmata wants to be a nurse so that she can help her family when they are sick and Patricia wants to be president of Sierra Leone.



What job do you want to do when you're older, and why? Share your ideas about the future with one of your friends – what are the similarities and what are the differences?

Write an invitation to ask people to join your village development committee. You have to explain what the committee is about, and what you are hoping to achieve in your local area.

**village
development
committee**

Dear

Yours sincerely,

Patricia's story



This is Patricia Sawie. She is 12 years old and the youngest of eight children in her family. She lives in a town called Gbap (pronounced Bap).

The land around Gbap is ideal for growing food, with fertile soil and plenty of water, but many people in the area have found it hard to grow enough to eat. This is partly because Sierra Leone is recovering from a civil war.

During the war, many people were killed and many more had to flee their homes. Though the war ended in 2002, it has taken a long time to repair the damage that was done to homes and farmland – and perhaps even more time to repair trust between people who were caught up in the fighting.

In Gbap, people are hard at work dealing with the challenges they face. They've set up a village development committee – a group who work together to make life better for everyone in the town. It's important that this committee listens to everyone, including the young people, so they can make decisions that improve life for the whole community.

Patricia knows exactly what she wants. She would like to study hard so that one day she might be able to become the first female president of Sierra Leone. She says, 'I would feel so proud to be the first woman president. I want to read enough so that I have the ability to be president.'

Young people with big plans need lots of energy and a safe place to study, so the village development committee is making sure the community works together to grow enough food to feed everyone. They are also making sure the town has a new school, where Patricia can study hard to achieve her dreams.

The old school was not safe: there were cracks in the walls, wooden beams hanging from the ceiling and termites nesting in the classroom. Everyone has come together to help the village development committee. They have been supported by the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone, a partner of Christian Aid, which provided some of the tools they needed. Patricia is excited about her new school. She says, 'It will be very good because we will have new desks and benches in the new building. We are happy that because the roof is new, the rafters will not fall on us again and the rain will not drop in our books. What we would like next is a school band!'