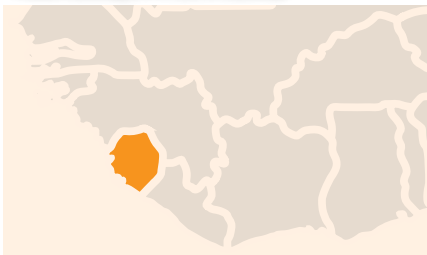


Partner Profile: A Call to Business



Photos courtesy of A Call to Business



In Sierra Leone, an estimated 75 percent of adult women and 79 percent of low-income adults lack access to formal financial services.¹

A Call to Business Savings and Loans Ltd. (ACTB) is a microfinance institution in Sierra Leone and a partner in Global Partnerships' Women-Centered Finance with Education initiative.²

WHO IS SERVED:

ACTB currently serves over 30,000 clients, with a focus on informal female microentrepreneurs; 72 percent of their clients are female.³ In a 2022 study, 86 percent of surveyed ACTB borrowers reported that their ACTB loan was the first time they were able to access a loan like the one provided, indicating the organization serves many individuals who have been previously excluded from financial services.⁴

WHAT IS DELIVERED:

ACTB clients can access group or individual loans to support income-generating activities. Prior to disbursement, borrowers receive an orientation session covering loan terms and conditions and other

know-your-credit information to help ensure borrowers are prepared to manage their loan. These sessions are delivered by loan officers at the branch and supplemented by loan officers' regular visits to borrowers throughout the loan cycle.

ACTB also offers savings accounts. Their Susu savings product in particular is designed to meet the needs of informal microentrepreneurs, as ACTB staff visit clients' businesses daily or weekly to collect savings conveniently at their doorstep for deposit.

To explore ways to expand outreach to Sierra Leone's rural communities, ACTB has launched a pilot agricultural loan designed to serve smallholder farmers. Borrowers receive their loan in the form of an in-kind package of agricultural inputs alongside guaranteed purchase contracts and agronomic technical assistance from specialized staff. In partnership with Wageningen University, a leading agricultural research institution, ACTB continues

to refine their technical assistance program with a focus on supporting smallholders to incorporate climate-smart strategies to local traditional farming methods.

WHY IT IS IMPACTFUL:

ACTB's clients can use their loans and financial education to make more informed economic decisions for their businesses and invest in opportunities to sustain or grow their incomes, enabling greater economic resilience and household well-being. A 2022 study of ACTB borrowers found that 97 percent of clients reported that their quality of life had improved because of ACTB, 98 percent reported increased income, and 91 percent reported an increase in the number and quality of meals consumed by their household.

"The loan has improved my earnings and savings, thereby reducing my dependency on my husband," reported one ACTB microfinance client from this study. "I can now take care of my needs with comfort and respect."

1. "The Global Findex Database," The World Bank, 2021, <https://globalfindex.worldbank.org>.
2. ACTB was a current borrower of Global Partnerships Social Investment Fund 6.0, LLC as of September 30, 2023.
3. Data as of June 30, 2023, as reported by ACTB.
4. Based on responses from 314 ACTB clients in a 2022 study by 60 Decibels, Inc
5. Ibid.
6. Quote from a 25-year-old female client participating in the above-mentioned 2022 study by 60 Decibels, Inc.