

Aminata Gba Kamara

“If we are committed and consistent, we can all ignite change.”

Aminata is an entrepreneur and advocate of economic empowerment for women in Sierra Leone.

When the Ebola outbreak devastated Sierra Leone in 2014 Aminata saw the full force of the chaos that ensued. She saw friends and family members, including her own mother – a nurse who had cared for the sick – die from the disease. Those who were left behind were incredibly vulnerable: often forced to marry, raped, or ostracized from school and community life out of fear of spreading Ebola. Following a 21-day quarantine, Aminata was abandoned by her community, and, as a means to escape poverty and sexual exploitation, moved from Freetown to Makeni with her brother. Here she began a beading business to make ends meet. Her beading work, which includes sandals and slippers, not only helped her and her brother financially, but gave her a new lease of life and a positive focus amidst the destabilization felt throughout Sierra Leone.

Aminata strongly believes in the potential for young women and men to escape poverty and exploitation through economic empowerment. She has seen first-hand the risks for children and women in the aftermath of a pandemic, with many forced into prostitution. To help combat these risks, Aminata runs workshops and campaigns in schools, providing career support and skills training sessions to help young people realize their talents.

Aminata is passionate about sharing her story to inspire action from policymakers on SDGs 1, 3 and 5, and continue the conversation on the impact of deadly diseases on current – and future – generations of Africans.