

Ice Ice Baby

Rebuilding Local Communities



Ice is in high demand in Sierra Leone. Limited electricity and frequent power cuts mean that many people – from families to fishermen – rely on ice to keep food fresh.

The Ebola outbreak was particularly challenging for fishermen and fish traders (the majority of whom are women). Quarantine measures severely restricted fishing activities, and as a result whole communities were stripped of their primary livelihoods.

Since quarantine measures were lifted, Ice Ice Baby has been supporting fishermen to get back on their feet.

For two months between December 2014 and January 2015 all local fishing activities were stopped in an effort to contain the spread of the Ebola virus. Fishermen remained on-shore and fish traders had no supply for the local market.

As fishermen have returned to sea, many were severely cash constrained having used up their small savings during quarantine.

Without ice, fishermen are limited to a day's catch as fish perishes quickly in the humid West African climate. Limited electricity supply makes ice a necessity for both fisherman and fish traders, allowing fishermen and boat owners to increase profits by prolonging their time at sea and economising on fuel.

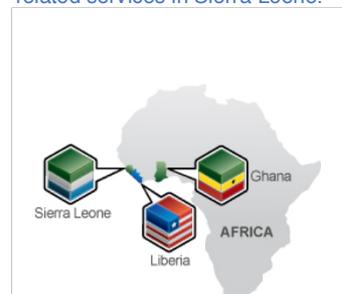
Since the quarantine was lifted, Ice Ice Baby has worked to help fishermen rebuild their livelihoods. The company provided credit to agents and long-term customers. In addition, despite significant food inflation during the crisis, Ice Ice Baby maintained stable prices, minimising the burden on fishermen and fish traders.



ManoCap is a private equity fund manager that makes equity investments in small to mid-cap enterprises in West Africa. We currently manage the Sierra Investment Fund (SIF) and the ManoCap Soros Fund (MSF).

SIF is a multi-sector fund with a mandate to invest in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana.

MSF invests in agribusiness and related services in Sierra Leone.



Ice Ice Baby: Helping artisanal fishermen get back on their feet

Ice Ice Baby was founded in 2007. Since then it has done business through tough economic times. The company continued to operate at the peak of the Ebola epidemic, ensuring employment for Ice Ice Baby's staff and agents, who are dependent on the company for their income and supply ice to hundreds of fishermen and traders. Business is now improving and over recent months the company has been able to offer salary increases across the board.

"We operated throughout the Ebola outbreak and the ice business has improved greatly, salaries have increased for all staff." Abdul Kamara, Ice Ice Baby Operations Manager

Ice Ice Baby: Rebuilding the local fishing sector following the Ebola crisis

Ice Ice Baby continued operations during the Ebola outbreak, allowing fish traders to resume business soon after quarantine measures were lifted.

Since the quarantines were lifted, Ice Ice Baby has been supporting fishermen and agents with micro-loans.

Despite food inflation, Ice Ice Baby maintained stable prices, minimising the burden of additional costs on fishermen and agents.

Tamba Kassewa from the Goderich fishing wharf, on Sierra Leone's Western peninsula, is one of Ice Ice Baby's sales agents. He supplies ice on a regular basis to hundreds of fishermen in his area. Ebola handicapped Tamba's business as fishermen were unable to go to sea during quarantine restrictions, and therefore stopped buying ice. Tamba's profits took a hit, forcing him to survive on his savings for several months.

As an agent Tamba is dependent on a reliable ice supplier and commission from sales to earn a living. Ice Ice Baby's continued operations throughout the outbreak allowed Tamba to resume business soon after quarantine measures were lifted and start earning an income again.

"Ice Ice Baby supplies...my ice. If they didn't operate it would have affected me greatly...I'm an agent, if I don't work I don't get anything." Tamba Kassewa, Ice Ice Baby Agent



Building sustainable communities

Naffie Sila, one of Tamba's main clients, is a fish trader from Goderich. She owns four boats supplying over 25 fish women, who in turn sell fish to numerous markets around the country's capital, Freetown. Ebola had a crippling effect on Naffie's business. With fishermen in her area under quarantine, her boats were unable to go to sea for four months.

Although business is still hard for Naffie she says Ice Ice Baby has helped her restart her business again by providing her with ice on credit.

"Things have improved since Ebola; Ice Ice Baby has helped me start my business again." Naffie Sila, fish trader, Goderich



Nimata Fofana, another one of Tamba's ice clients is a fish trader from Goderich. Quarantine restrictions forced her to move her family to a neighbouring village, limiting her ability to work.

"Because of Ebola my business was ruined. It has not been easy doing business, I made a big loss. Sometimes we went to bed with no food...sometimes government told us to stay indoors."

With restricted movement, little income and inflated food prices, Nimata's family struggled to make ends meet.

The fact that there were no increases in ice prices made it easier for Nimata to start doing business locally again once quarantines came to an end.

"The price of Ice Ice Baby ice was stable. If the price had gone up it would have been hard...when we want to go to sea for three or four days we buy a lot of ice," Nimata Fofana, Fish trader Goderich.