

# **‘God Called Her’: 9-Year-Old Girl’s Song About COVID-19 Goes Viral**

The voice is strong, and the words are resolute: “Let’s protect ourselves to save our family and our country; let’s stop the public gatherings.”

The singer? She’s 9 years old.

Joselia Kollie’s song has been getting airplay on Liberian radio and praise from health officials. She said she wanted to do her part to stop the spread of COVID-19 because “whenever bad things happen, we, the children, will always suffer.”

At least 16 people have died since Liberia’s first confirmed case on March 16, and the West African country is still rebuilding its public health sector after the Ebola epidemic killed 4,810 people between 2014 and 2016.

“I believe this song will help fight the virus because the song says prevention. We need to prevent ourselves from coronavirus by washing our hands, not shaking hands and not sneezing on one another,” she said by phone from her home in Gbarnga, 180 kilometers (112 miles) from the capital.

Joselia began singing at the age of 3, and recently told her mother she wanted to do a song about fighting coronavirus.

“God called her to certain things, and she wants to fulfill her destiny,” said Amanda T. Kollie, herself a popular gospel singer.

Her mother helped her write the song, which was recorded in a local studio and then sent out to radio stations.

The song reminds Liberians of how much the country has been

through.

“Some years back, we suffered from a civil war, we suffered from Ebola that took away many lives,” she sings. “This time around, it’s coronavirus—coronavirus is so terrible.”

Joselia already has accomplished more than many adults: She was just 6 when her parents helped her set up a charity to allow friends to stay in school when their families faced financial difficulties. The charity, Build My Future Foundation, or BUFF, currently is helping five girls and two boys in rural Liberia.

Dr. Francis Kateh, Liberia’s chief medical officer and one of those on the front lines against COVID-19, said he was “overwhelmed with gratitude” for Joselia’s effort. And veteran DJ and radio entertainment journalist Patrick Okai offered high praise for the girl’s song.

“The message is powerful” he said, “especially with the chorus line that says ‘prevention is better than cure.’” {eoa}

*The Associated Press*