



SIERRA LEONE NEWSLETTER

Programme Edition



A SPECIAL DEDICATION TO OUR DEPARTING COUNTRY DIRECTOR, EVARISTE SINDAYIGAYA, FOR
LEADING A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION AT PLAN INTERNATIONAL SIERRA LEONE

PLAN INTERNATIONAL SIERRA LEONE NEWSLETTER

PROGRAMME EDITION

WELCOME

Every child deserves the opportunity to dream, to grow, and to thrive. Plan International's work embodies this belief by striving to create a world where all children, regardless of their background or circumstances, can reach their full potential. As an organization dedicated to advancing children's rights and equality for girls, Plan International holds a special place in my heart.

Reflecting on the past few months, I am filled with gratitude for the incredible experiences and milestones that have unfolded. Amidst the challenges and uncertainties, one particular highlight stands out—the unwavering resilience and determination displayed by both our colleagues and the young people. Witnessing their strength and perseverance in the face of adversity has been truly inspiring. It reaffirms my belief in the power of collective action and the ability to create meaningful change even in the most challenging times.

To my esteemed colleagues and the youth of Sierra Leone and the region, I want to convey a heartfelt message: **Together, we have the capacity to overcome any obstacle and transform lives. Let us continue to unite, to advocate for the rights of every child, and to foster an inclusive and supportive environment for young people to thrive. Your voices matter, and your dreams are valid. Embrace the power within you and let it be a guiding force in shaping a brighter future.**

In the words of Nelson Mandela, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.' Let us continue to empower and invest in our youth, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to become the change-makers and leaders of tomorrow. With unwavering dedication, compassion, and a collective effort, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of countless children and shape a brighter future for all.



Written by Hajaratu, 22 years old, Plan International Sierra Leone Intern and She Leads Regional Representative

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KAMANDA KAMARA**
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MY HEALTH. MY RIGHTS.
PAGE 24



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Sierra Leone**



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Sierra Leone**

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A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

EVARISTE'S LEADERSHIP FOOTPRINT IN SIERRA LEONE

Evariste Sindayigaya with programme participant, @Plan International Sierra Leone

After five years of service to Plan International Sierra Leone, we say goodbye to our Country Director and wish him all the best for the future. It truly has been a journey of transformation. We are giving the floor to the young people of Sierra Leone for their farewell wishes.

"I want to thank a wonderful man that has created an impact in my life, and not just in my life but in the life of other young people as well. A man that created a space where young people's voices can be valued, where they matter and are respected. You have done a great work in our life and I assure you your legacy will be continued by us young people. My message to all change makers out there is – I want you all to be like Evariste to have an open-door policy for young people."

- Paulina, IT Intern and Girls Out Loud Member

"One key inspiration that will stay with me is Evariste's leadership character. He always challenges us as young people to take up leadership roles in terms of programme planning, designing, implementing and evaluating. He always ensures that we, the young people take leadership and be involved. His advice has always been boosting me to do my school and work with all seriousness."

- Sorie, Youth Representative, Recruitment Panel at Plan International Sierra Leone

THANK YOU

"Thank you for giving me and other young people the space to lead and to learn. Thank you for being such a good leader. One thing I will miss about you is your inclusiveness and how you encourage young people to be themselves. We're going to miss you."

- Cynthia, Girls Out Loud Member and Reception Intern

"You've helped us so much, you've blossomed the youth engagement sector of Plan Sierra Leone. That is one thing I will miss about you. One thing you have inspired me to do is how to be myself as a young person. We learned how to claim our space as young people and to explore and ensure that our voices are heard. Thank you!"

- Judy, Deputy Girls Out Loud Coordinator





A colleague living with disability and Evariste Sindayigaya, Country Director of Plan International Sierra Leone © Plan International Sierra Leone

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PART IN THE JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

I am honoured to have this opportunity to say THANK YOU to you and appreciate our journey of transformation.

After 5 years, my journey with Plan International Sierra Leone comes to an end on 31st July 2023. At one time or another, most of us get to a point where we need to bid others goodbye, but it's not always easy to come up with the right words. I knew this day would come but what I did not know was how difficult it would be to have to bid farewell to colleagues and a country that I have come to love and respect.

There is no possible way that I can capture the sentiments and words to express my appreciation, gratitude and the pride to have been associated to and with Sierra Leone and its lovely people for the past 9 years.

Plan International has mentored and guided me to becoming the best I can be in championing and advancing the rights of children and equality for girls. It was not all perfect but together we achieved milestones that have made us a better organization. For that I leave with a wealth of knowledge and a fantastic experience I will always treasure.

I would not know where to start or stop in thanking colleagues and partners who have made the last 5 years so meaningful and enjoyable. I have not witnessed more collaboration, transparency and willingness to work together for the greater good of the Country Office than what we have and celebrate today. Your contribution to Plan International is immense and you have inspired others to make a difference. You will always be remembered for the part you have played in this journey.

A big shout-out and appreciation goes my colleagues at Plan International Sierra Leone. Your commitments and dedication to deliver on Plan's mission and vision have been truly inspiring and it's been an honour to work alongside you. The knowledge that you shared and the learning you brought are immeasurable and priceless. You make Plan's work

**“PLAN
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CHILDREN AND
EQUALITY FOR
GIRLS.”**

**- EVARISTE
SINDAYIGAYA**

meaningful. You are the backbone of this organisation. The new Country Director is going to gain an amazing team.

As Country Director of Plan International Sierra Leone, I got to spend quality time with most of you throughout the 5 years, supporting, pushing our ambition and striving to make the best out of the many challenges. Throughout the engagements, I was inspired by the spirit, resilience and commitment of the people and communities we work with, each one of my colleagues, children and young people, and partners, all of you have been my inspiration. Working with my colleagues has been a pleasure and I feel privileged to have had them on my team and words cannot express the sentiments I feel as I transition. They fought against all the odds by earning the trust, admiration and respect of the people we serve. Our achievements have always been built on their efforts, and I thank them for their striking professionalism, dedication, passion and commitment towards work. Their hard work and dedication embodied the values of Plan International perfectly, and standing up for the most vulnerable was the highest priority for them. There could not have been a better way to stand with children, especially the Girls! They have surpassed all expectations and made "Mama Salone" proud.

My thoughts are turned to the people we serve and those who helped me drive our ambition of supporting girls Learn, Lead, Decide and Thrive. Because of you, my colleagues and I at Plan International Sierra Leone did not relent in our efforts to support and push our ambition. Thank you to everyone who made it possible for me to do what I love every day and supported our journey of transformation.

My colleagues and I could not have stood with the most vulnerable without the support and generosity of our partners. On behalf of the thousands who were impacted by your support, I say thank you. As I transition, I ask that you continue to be part of our journey of helping "Girls Learn, Lead, Decide and Thrive" in Sierra Leone.

I am so excited to see what the future holds for Plan International Sierra Leone and the great people of Sierra Leone, especially children and young people. This gives me confidence that Plan will continue to be a leader in advancing children's rights and equality for girls for years to come. Always remember, one move in support of humanity is always one step in the right direction. So, let us keep doing what we are doing.

I take with me lifelong friends and acquaintances, all with whom I share a common bond. Sierra Leone is and always will be my home. My hope is to one day leave an impression on others similar to the one you have left on me. I am going away now but I leave a piece of my heart in Sierra Leone with you for safekeeping. It's been a pleasure working in Sierra Leone, and I will genuinely miss it.

I wish you all the very best for the future and thank you for your support, friendship and camaraderie that has made my time in Sierra Leone so rewarding and fulfilling

Tenki, Tenki, Goodbye, Kwaheri, Au Revoir, Adios.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PART IN THE JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION



*Evariste Sindayigaya
with regional and Country
Office colleagues (1); at
office renovation (2); with
programme participants (3), ©
Plan International Sierra Leone*

EVARISTE SINDAYIGAYA

Country Director
Plan International
Sierra Leone

 @esindayigaya



SHE LEADS

Princess, 10, and her friends at school
© Plan International Sierra Leone

EMPOWERING GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN TO ADVOCATE FOR THEIR RIGHTS IN SIERRA LEONE

She Leads is dedicated to working with girls and young women, as well as engaging stakeholders (e.g. parents, government institutions) and boys and young men, and government institutions. The project aims to create a supportive environment where girls and young women can thrive and become influential leaders in their communities. Our primary goal is to enhance the leadership skills of girls and young women, providing them with mentors and empowering them to raise their voices and actively participate in decision-making processes. 380 girls and young women have actively planned and delivered their activities over the last year. Over a five year duration the project aims to reach 4,500 girls and young women.

We are excited about the positive change we are witnessing in the lives of the girls and young women involved in the She Leads project. With the continued support of the Government of the Netherlands and our dedicated team, we are confident that we can inspire a new generation of empowered female leaders in Sierra Leone.



3

Districts



380

Participants

Why do we need She Leads?

Girls and young women continue to face discrimination in political, economic, social, cultural and education spaces. Disproportionally affected by sexual and gender-based violence, girls and young women in Sierra Leone face enormous challenges and barriers.

Plan International is implementing the She Leads project to support them to advocate for their rights, break down barriers and bring gender transformative change to communities, institutions, and society. Girls and young women have the right to take up leadership positions and participate in decision-making.



Government of
the Netherlands

HIGHLIGHTS



Group photo at the Boys and Young Men Conference, © Plan International Sierra Leone

Boys and Young Men (BYM) Conference: Promote Gender Equality and Equity

The Boys and Young Men (BYM) Conference on promoting gender equality and equity brought together 40 boys and young men from all 30 project communities across Moyamba, Koinadugu, and Western Area Rural and Urban for the three-day event. The conference educated the boys and young men about their crucial role in addressing negative gender and social norms. The She Leads projects empowers them to challenge the norms and practices that restrict the participation of girls and young women in decision-making processes. The importance of promoting gender equality and socializing boys and girls equally was emphasized.

To guide our discussions, we collaborated with the Men Association for Gender Equality (MAGE), a national organization dedicated to engaging men in promoting gender equality. Through interactive sessions, the boys and young men learned about positive masculinity and how it can contribute to empowering women and promoting gender equality. At the conclusion of the conference, the BYM participants made a commitment to take positive actions in their communities. We are proud of the progress the boys and young men have made in their understanding of gender-related issues. Their increased knowledge has influenced their mindset and inspired them to be advocates for change.

Training for young and first-time political female aspirants



Girls and Young Women at the workshop, © She Leads Project Sierra Leone

The two-day training was attended by 30 young female aspirants representing the four main political parties in Sierra Leone. These aspiring politicians were preparing for the general elections in June 2023.

SHE LEADS



Boys and Young Men coming together for the conference © Plan International Sierra Leone

WANT TO SEE MORE?

Watch the video now. Click on the button below:

[WATCH HERE](#)

The primary objective of the training was to empower the female aspirants with essential skills to address gaps related to elections. They were equipped with strategies to mobilize local support, engage communities on issues that affect women, and effectively utilize local resources.

One crucial aspect of the training involved informing the young aspirants about the role of governance institutions in facilitating women's political participation. By understanding how the institutions can create spaces for women, the aspirants can navigate the political landscape more effectively.

We are excited about the progress and potential of the young female aspirants. They are set to bring about positive change and promote gender equality in the political sphere.



A facilitator speaking about female empowerment in politics, © She Leads Project Sierra Leone

SHE LEADS



Young woman speaking about political participation, © She Leads Project Sierra Leone

Inclusion



Fatu, Sign Language Interpreter, at the Girls in ICT event, © Plan International Sierra Leone

The She Leads project strongly believes in inclusivity and works hard to ensure that everyone can participate fully in all project activities. A specific focus is on reaching out to and supporting individuals with disabilities so that they can actively engage in the project. Our selection criteria are designed to provide equal opportunities for everyone, creating a space where inclusivity is valued and embraced. The activities include chaperones and sign language interpreters, like Fatu who is the only female professional sign language interpreter, to ensure everyone can participate fully.



**READ MORE ABOUT
FATU'S STORY ON
OUR WEBSITE**

READ MORE



MEET PRINCESS, 17

Princess is inspiring her peers and leading change in her community after taking part in Plan International's She Leads project.

Princess is a courageous 17-year-old from a poverty-stricken village in Moyamba District, Sierra Leone. Despite having the odds against her, this fierce young lady is determined to chase her dreams and make a difference in the world.

Princess, who lives two villages away from her school, faces a daily struggle to get an education. Her parents, who are farmers, struggle to make ends meet and cannot afford the 20 Leones (about \$ 0.88) per term required to pay her school fees. Despite the challenges, Princess remains determined in her pursuit of a brighter future.

The She Leads project proved to be the catalyst that Princess needed to transform her life. Before joining the programme, she struggled with public speaking and found it challenging to assert herself. However, with the help of She Leads, Princess discovered a new-found confidence in herself and she has learned to speak with conviction, lead with confidence, and make a difference with courage.

"Now, I can stand up for what is right and represent my community as a young people's advocate. She Leads has transformed me into the Princess I was meant to be." - Princess.

SHE LEADS

**"I USED TO BE
AFRAID TO SPEAK
UP, BUT WITH
SHE LEADS, I
FOUND MY VOICE
AND GAINED THE
CONFIDENCE
TO BECOME A
LEADER."**

- PRINCESS, 17



Princess, 17, speaking in her classroom © Plan International Sierra Leone

**WANT TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT
PRINCESS AND
SHE LEADS?**

Read the full story on our website. Click on the button below:

READ MORE



INTEGRATED SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

Girls eating their lunch at school,
© Plan International Sierra Leone

PROVIDING DAILY, FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR CHILDREN ACROSS 6 DISTRICTS IN SIERRA LEONE

The Integrated School Feeding Programme (ISFP) supports over 1,300 pre and primary schools in 6 districts in Sierra Leone. This means over 301,000 children including 152,500 girls are targeted to receive school meals at lunchtime. Thanks to the funding from the Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, and with financial contribution from Plan International Canada it creates a social safety net for vulnerable children, families, and communities, increasing children's access, retention and completion of education.



6
Districts

Why do we need a school feeding programme?

Sierra Leone faces food insecurity, which impacts over half of its population. Overall, there are almost two million children in need of nutrition and over one million in need of child protection measures. This situation has had a significant impact on children's ability to access education.

One effective way to enhance accessibility to education for children is through school feeding programs. These programs aim to provide students with a daily nutritious diet while attending school. The Integrated School Feeding Programme (ISFP) serves as a vital platform for children to access education. ISFP ensures that children receive a nutritious meal each day, challenges societal expectations around gender inequality, safeguarding, child protection, and other social norms that create barriers for women and girls. It enhances enrolment, attendance, and eases financial burdens for families in poverty.

We firmly believe that investing in school feeding programs and prioritizing children's well-being and education will have a positive impact on their lives and the future of Sierra Leone.



Over
301,000
Children



HIGHLIGHTS



ISFP staff is training caretakers on school garden management, © Plan International Sierra Leone

School Gardens Pilot

Our primary goal with the school gardens is to promote home-grown school feeding, which means producing the food the children consume right at the schools. By doing so, we ensure the sustainability of ISFP.

The gardens are located in Port Loko and Moyamba district and serve as valuable learning spaces where students can put their classroom knowledge into practice. Through practical demonstrations in the field, students can witness first-hand how their knowledge translates into real-life agricultural practices. By growing their own produce, the schools can reduce costs and provide nutritious, affordable vegetables for meals.

In line with our commitment to environmental sustainability, we have adopted an eco-friendly gardening approach. This means utilizing environmentally safe methods in our gardening practices, such as employing bio-pesticides and prioritizing organic fertilizers.



School Garden, © Plan International Sierra Leone

To kick-start this initiative, we conducted an assessment exercise to carefully select schools where the pilot school gardens would be established. Dedicated caretakers were identified and trained, and are responsible for managing the gardens.

We are excited about the potential of the pilot school gardens and how they can positively impact the children and communities.

INTEGRATED SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME



Training on gardening methods, © Plan International Sierra Leone



School Garden at a school, © Plan International Sierra Leone



WANT TO SEE MORE?

Watch the video now. Click on the button below:

[WATCH HERE](#)

HIGHLIGHTS



Training of 50 Trainers on feedback mechanism, © Plan International Sierra Leone

Gender Equality and Safeguarding Training of Trainers

ISFP seeks to transform community norms, attitudes, and behaviours through targeted training sessions. The project involves 1,368 schools and multiple communities in six districts. Adopting a Training of Trainers (ToT) approach, 55 ISFP staff members attended a week-long training session coming together from all districts. The training focused on positive parenting, psychosocial support, safeguarding and child protection, gender equality and inclusion, communications, and feedback mechanisms. By building the capacity of our staff, they in turn provide training to community members and various stakeholders on key messages and practices. This collaborative effort aims to transform norms, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that create barriers for children, particularly girls, within their communities.

INTEGRATED SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME



ISFP staff during the ToT session, © Plan International Sierra Leone



Groupwork at the Training of Trainers, © Plan International Sierra Leone

DO YOU HAVE FEEDBACK OR CONCERNS?

If you see corruption, theft, or abuse, do not wait; report it immediately. Call or text 511—help us interrupt those that are corrupt! No data is needed, there are no costs and messages are confidential.

Learn more about our feedback mechanism - Telerivet



CORRUPTION



THEFT



ABUSE

[READ MORE](#)



MEET ISHA, 10

INTEGRATED SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

Isha, a 10-year-old girl in Sierra Leone lives with her single mother and three sisters in a small community in Port Loko district. Despite her mother's financial struggles, Isha remains enthusiastic about learning. Previously, her mother could only provide her with 1 Leone (\$0.04) for school, leaving Isha without money for lunch and resulting in frequent delays or missed classes. However, the introduction of the Integrated School Feeding Programme (ISFP) has addressed this issue.

Musa Koroma is Isha's teacher. He describes her as a brilliant girl who absorbs everything that is being taught to her. However, Mr Koroma reveals that before the introduction of ISFP, Isha was often late for school as her family struggled to afford her lunch.

"The integrated school feeding programme is not just about providing meals; it is about giving children a chance to learn and succeed," says Mr Koroma. "I have seen the difference it has made in the lives of Isha and many other children like her, and I believe it is a crucial investment in our future."

Isha is motivated by her strong desire to overcome poverty and improve the living conditions of her mother and sister when she grows up. She encourages other children to prioritise their education and strive for excellence. Moreover, she appeals to those who are more fortunate to extend a helping hand to those in need. Her determination is an inspiration to all.

**"THANKS TO THE
SCHOOL FEEDING
PROGRAMME, I
NOW EAT EVERY
LUNCHTIME AT
SCHOOL"**

- ISHA, 10



Isha, 10, eating lunch at school, © Plan International Sierra Leone

**WANT TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT
ISHA?**

Read the full story on our website. Click on the button below:

READ MORE

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

**“I COMMIT TO
LEADING BY
EXAMPLE”
- KAMANDA
KAMARA**



Kamanda Kamara, Programme Implementation and Influencing Area Manager © Plan International Sierra Leone

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE: KAMANDA'S JOURNEY OF BECOMING PLAN SIERRA LEONE'S YOUNGEST DISTRICT MANAGER

Written by Kamanda Kamara, 28, Programme Implementation and Influencing Area Manager

Until now, I was docile and thought I had no future and this is a story of me and my “corporate mother” Plan International.

Hailing from a village of thatch houses in Port Loko District, Sierra Leone with an extended family of 28, life was unbearable – I was a synonym to poverty and didn't have a vision or dream. After joining a Plan International youth partner, Kids Arise, I started realizing the meaning of life and developed a passion for children and young people's rights. Working with Plan International, I came to realize that the development of any nation relies on the attention it gives to its greatest resource - children and young people. This is when I dreamt of a world where young people take up leadership roles in community governance to reshape development agendas for a just, equal and peaceful society for all.

My journey with Plan International began in 2012 when I joined its Global Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) following a rigorous peer selection process. As a member of the YAP, I worked with other young advocates from around the world to advise Plan's global CEO on the organization's youth engagement strategy, global humanitarian work and other development agendas. I was the first committee member from a Plan Country Programme to sit on the Members Assembly.

As a Committee, we challenged Plan International's highest leadership structure and debated on why youth engagement was important. I also contributed to developing and reshaping local, national and global development agendas, including the first UN General Assembly Youth Take Over ('Malala Day'), a conference that produced six education resolutions presented to the UN. Today, Plan International has effective and invaluable Youth Advisory Panels across the world.

My advocacy work with Plan International continued during the height of the Ebola epidemic, where I worked with my peers to create our



Plan International Members Assembly meeting, 2013



Global Youth Steering Committee developing the youth engagement strategy, 2013



Plan Youth Delegates at the UNGA Youth Takeover in New York, 2014



Kamanda with AB, former CEO of Plan International, 2015

own youth-led awareness campaign, distributing educational materials about the crisis and advocating for a stronger government response. My leadership in this work took me to Doha, Qatar, as well as France (the French Senate), where I was invited to speak on the participation of young people in crisis situations. The innovative approach we applied in this trajectory made us winners of the 2015 Plan International Global Award on 'Most Use of Innovation and Technology in Crisis'.

My Education

As a young boy from a poor home, achieving academic aspirations seemed impossible. I had to do farm work on weekends and hustle to pay school fees and other basic amenities. Allowances from my voluntary work with Plan International played a huge part in me completing secondary school education. Plan International further came to my rescue through an internship opportunity. A key facet of my advocacy has been creating more internship opportunities for young people. I am proud that it has now been mainstreamed in Plan International Sierra Leone's country strategic plan with an internship policy, and over 100 participants from diverse backgrounds (including young people living with disability) have and are still interning. Through hard work, determination and support from friends and Plan International, I graduated with a 1st BSC in Accounting and Finance in February 2020.

All the above achievements inspired me to be loyal to my 'corporate mother' Plan International, and to give back to society.

My Professional Journey with Plan International

I came back to the organization and started my professional journey in November 2019 as a **Gender Transformative Animator**, and then as a **Project Officer** managing the Marginalized Girls Access to Education project that supported over 400 vulnerable young women to become professional teachers. I later served as a **District Coordinator** for the Integrated School Feeding programme in Moyamba providing 3,947 school children with daily nutritional meals to improve access, retention and completion of school education. Later, the leadership of Plan International Sierra Leone entrusted me with the responsibility of managing the World Bank/IFC supported [Youth Social Economic Empowerment project](#), where I used my "learning by doing" and "community-led" approaches to provide 50 vulnerable youths with access to vocational and life skills for social cohesion, leadership, livelihood and economic empowerment.

Between November 2021 and May 2023, I served as **Youth Engagement Officer** fostering youth engagement in policy influencing, programme design, implementation, and evaluation. I also supported youth advocacy, innovation, and campaigns, especially through Plan International Sierra Leone's Youth Advisory Panels and youth media activities. In partnership with Sierra Leone's Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), I facilitated the establishment of MBSSE's first Youth Advisory Group in Sierra Leone, currently advising the ministry on how to provide educational opportunities and quality school resources for children.

KAMANDA'S JOURNEY OF BECOMING THE YOUNGEST DISTRICT MANAGER



Kamanda at the Summit on the Participation of Young People in Crisis at the French Senate, 2017



Kamanda studying for university exams



Graduated with Bachelor of Science in Accounting & Finance, 2020

Today, in line with our feminist leadership principles and visionary leadership, I have been appointed as the **Programme Implementation and Influencing Area Manager** for Moyamba Office through a competitive process. In my new role, I lead and provide support to all programmes, projects and influencing initiatives in Moyamba district. I feel proud, rewarded, elated, inspired, fulfilled, and honoured to serve in such a high-level managerial role. While this is meritorious, it is the first time in the history of Plan International Sierra Leone for a young person my age (28 years) to be accorded this opportunity to lead its programme and influencing work. It is a landmark to making my dream which seemed impossible become possible. It shows that youth leadership and contributions are highly valued by the Country Leadership Team. Thanks to Plan International Sierra Leone for trusting me and in particular, for believing in the leadership of young people. With my leadership direction titled **“The Moving Train” (with young people at the center)**, I am highly determined to continue to learn and deliver Plan’s ambition with passion, dedication, innovation, diligence and excellence. I hereby commit to mobilizing colleagues in Moyamba around Plan International’s values and ambition and to leading by example.

My message to the young people and Plan staff - many thanks for your incredible support and solidarity over the years in the youth engagement realm – you’re great contributors to this landmark. I trust that with Plan International and your efforts, you can achieve the same or even more – it’s my challenge to you. I call on all the young people of Sierra Leone and Moyamba district in particular to join me in the dispensation of the PIIA management and leadership so as to incredibly deliver our ambition together. I implore us all to be optimistic, unite and work together as a force to create a world that advances children’s rights and equality for girls.

As the Country Director of Plan International Sierra Leone, Evariste Sindayigaya fondly says, “To help fulfil their rights, we need to create safe and enabling spaces for young people to offer inspiring and original insights on issues that matter to them. The pace in which the world changes must be matched with accelerated initiatives to ensure equal opportunities for all young people. Therefore, we should look to the energy and creativity of young people”.

The young people and I look forward to seeing youth leadership in higher positions being mainstreamed across all Plan International Country Offices and in national, district and community governance structures across Sierra Leone.

KAMANDA'S JOURNEY OF BECOMING THE YOUNGEST DISTRICT MANAGER



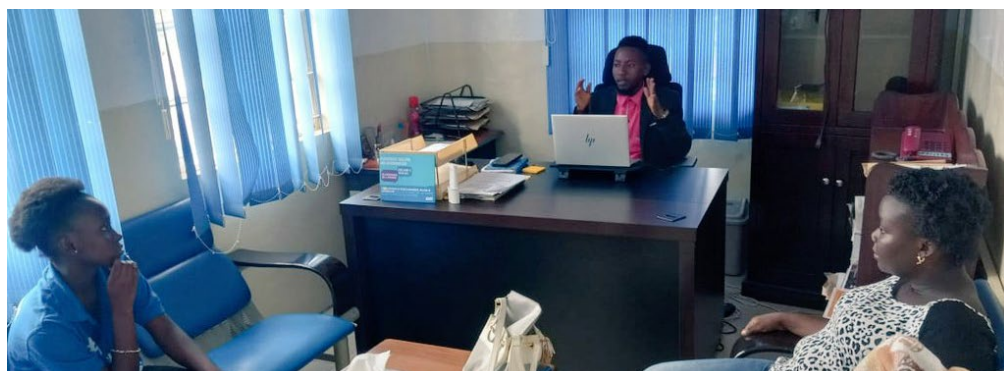
Kamanda facilitating a VSLA training, 2019



First day of school feeding in a primary school in Moyamba District, 2021



Launch of MBSSE Youth Advisory Group, 2022



Discussion with National YAP Representatives from Moyamba District, 2023



SAFER SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS

SS4G workshop at school © Plan International Sierra Leone

CREATING A SAFE AND SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENT FOR GIRLS TO LEARN AND THRIVE

Safer Schools for Girls (SS4G) is dedicated to making schools safe and creating supportive environments where girls can thrive and reach their full potential, funded by Comic Relief. Together with the Daindemben Federation as our local partner, Plan International is implementing the project in Koinadugu district, aiming to create a school environment free from all forms of violence, with the goal to reach over 5,500 participants.



1

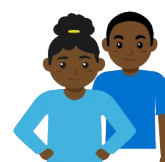
District

Why do we need SS4G?

Girls in Sierra Leone face significant challenges when it comes to accessing education. They often experience different forms of violence at school based on their gender, such as bullying, harassment, and even sexual exploitation and abuse. Media reports have highlighted the alarming rates of sexual exploitation in exchange for good grades. Survivors of this violence are at risk of negative consequences such as early and unwanted pregnancies, early marriage, and lasting psychological effects that hinder their ability to reach their full potential.

The Safer Schools for Girls (SS4G) project, is dedicated to addressing School Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and creating a safe learning environment for girls in the Koinadugu district. A comprehensive approach is taken that focuses on the individual, community, and institutional levels.

Plan International is working towards a future where girls in Sierra Leone can learn and thrive in a safe and supportive environment. By empowering girls and raising awareness SS4G aims to create lasting change and ensure that every girl has the opportunity to realize her full potential.



Over
5,500
Participants



HIGHLIGHTS



Girls and Boys of the Champions of Change sessions, © Plan International Sierra Leone

Champion of Change

The Champions of Change model encourages both girls and boys to explore and question gender norms. By engaging in ongoing reflection and learning, the children work towards transforming deeply ingrained beliefs and challenging existing power dynamics in their communities.

SS4G has been conducting weekly Champions of Change sessions in the 10 schools where the project operates. We bring together 300 children (15 boys and 15 girls in each school) in separate groups based on their gender. These sessions are an essential part of the project and aim to empower children, especially girls, by helping them understand their rights and their sexual reproductive health.

Inclusivity is a key value of the project. SS4G is currently working with three girls and one boy who have different forms of disabilities, ensuring that they are included in the Champions of Change group. Additionally, during project meetings, we always invite persons with disabilities to contribute their insights, which greatly advance our project goals.

During the sessions, the focus is on both learning and playing games to engage the children. Each school has four mentors, two females to engage with the girls and two males to engage with the boys. The modules for the girls cover important topics such as being assertive, understanding gender, body confidence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, enjoying healthy relationships, living free from gender-based violence, and being economically empowered. By actively participating in these sessions, the children will develop a stronger commitment to gender equality and promote healthy and equal relationships. Plan International believes that empowering girls and boys with this knowledge will lead to positive changes in their lives and communities.

Innovative feedback mechanisms

The SS4G project has adopted Plan International Sierra Leone's innovative and youth-led feedback mechanism. This digital system uses SMS (text messages) to address communication challenges and create a two-way feedback channel. Telerivet works across various technologies, including SMS, chat apps, polls, voice response, airtime transfer, mobile rewards, and integration with local messaging providers. The use of SMS channels is particularly beneficial for SS4G as it allows

SAFER SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS



Champions of Change session, © Plan International Sierra Leone



Girls during a workshop, © Plan International Sierra Leone

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TELIVET?

Read about our work on our website. Click on the button below:

[READ MORE](#)

communication over long distances, making it effective even in remote areas with limited or no internet access. This technology ensures that the project can reach communities that might otherwise be difficult to connect with.

To make this system youth-centered, we have established a team of Information Focal Points (IFPs) within the community. These young people are hired and trained as data collectors for SS4G. Equipped with basic mobile phones capable of sending SMS messages, they play a crucial role in gathering feedback and information from the project communities.

By using Telerivet and engaging young people as IFPs, we create a trusted and safe space where community members can share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions. This feedback is vital for us to continuously improve our project and ensure that it meets the needs of the community.

MEET SALIFU, 13

Meet Salifu, a 13-year-old boy from a small community in the Koinadugu District. Salifu is a pupil in class six and a member of the SS4G Champions of Change school club. Growing up in a society dominated by males and influenced by traditional beliefs, Salifu used to think that girls are strangers in their home since they are meant to marry and leave the house. However, since joining the Champions of Change, he has learned so much about gender equality, stereotypes, and norms.

Salifu shares, “Being part of the Champions of Change has opened my eyes to the importance of treating boys and girls equally. I’ve realized that the gender stereotypes and norms deeply rooted in our society need to be abolished. Now, I can help with household chores like washing dishes, fetching water, sweeping, and doing laundry, just like my female friends.”

Salifu is grateful for his membership in the Champions of Change club. Through the continuous awareness programs organized by the mentors, he has seen a positive shift in his mindset and behaviours. He believes that the frequent interventions and sensitization efforts of the SS4G project have contributed to the growing momentum for girls’ education in his community.

Fatu Mansaray, Salifu’s caregiver and female teacher, has noticed a remarkable change in his behaviour. She commends the wonderful work of Plan International and the Champions of Change initiative, which she believes has positively influenced Salifu’s interactions and attitudes. Fatu recalls how he used to be arrogant, but now he speaks politely and willingly helps his sisters with household tasks such as fetching water, washing dishes, and even grinding pepper.

Fatu concludes by encouraging Plan International and Daindemben to continue their valuable engagement with children through the Champions of Change sessions. She recognizes the impact these sessions have on nurturing positive behaviours and transforming young lives.

SAFER SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS

**“BEING PART OF
THE CHAMPIONS
OF CHANGE HAS
OPENED MY
EYES TO THE
IMPORTANCE
OF TREATING
BOYS AND GIRLS
EQUALLY”**

- SALIFU, 13



TEACHER TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE GIRLS' EDUCATION

Young women showing their
certificates
© Plan International Sierra Leone

CREATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR YOUNG WOMEN AND CONTRIBUTING TO A SKILLED AND DIVERSE TEACHING WORKFORCE

The goal of the Teacher Training for Inclusive Girls' Education (TTIGE) project is to provide support to marginalized young women living in rural areas who face several challenges that hinder them from completing their education. These young women have not had the opportunity to develop professional skills but are eager to become teachers and contribute to increasing the number of qualified female teachers in Sierra Leone.

With funds from Dubai Cares and in partnership with The Open University, the project supports 210 young women in Kailahun district to become teachers.

We are committed to promoting inclusive education and ensuring that all girls, regardless of their background or location, have equal access to quality education.



1

District



210

Student Teachers



دبي العطاء
Dubai Cares



مبادرات محمد بن راشد آل مكتوم العالمية
Mohammed bin Rashid
Al Maktoum Global Initiatives

Why do we need TTIGE?

Our aim is to break the negative cycle that involves a shortage of female teachers, low-quality education in under-resourced areas, and limited aspirations for girls within their communities.

Sierra Leone currently ranks 139 out of 153 in Educational Attainment for the Global Gender Gap Index. This means that there is a significant disparity in educational opportunities between girls and boys. Girls often face discrimination from their families and communities, who prioritize domestic duties over their education. A lack of female role models as teachers limits the social perspective on the vital role women can play in education and society.

We believe that by increasing the number of qualified female teachers and creating a supportive learning environment, we can transform the educational experience for girls in Sierra Leone.

HIGHLIGHTS



Training promoting gender equality and women's rights, © Plan International Sierra Leone

Training promoting gender equality and women's rights

In February 2023, the TTIGE team organized a ten-day gender training program across five chiefdoms. The training was a great success, reaching 150 participants, including three individuals with disabilities. The main objective of the training was to enhance participants' understanding of gender equality and empower them to apply their newfound knowledge in their communities. Plan International believes that by promoting women's rights and ensuring the full and meaningful participation of marginalized individuals, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society.

Community Engagement

The community engagement meetings serve as important advocacy platforms where community members come together to learn about the significance of supporting the Student Teachers, in achieving their ambitions. It is also an opportunity to provide updates on the progress of the project.

Recently, a meeting across the five chiefdoms was held, bringing together various community stakeholders. Participants included parents, caregivers, husbands/spouses, head teachers, and Student Teachers themselves. This was an opportunity to provide feedback on the project's implementation, particularly focusing on the academic performance of the Student Teachers in the Teacher Training College. Husbands and partners pledged to assist with domestic chores at home, allowing the Student Teachers more time to focus on their modules and academic responsibilities. Additionally, the stakeholders expressed their gratitude and appreciation to Plan International for the remarkable work empowering young girls and women in the Kailahun District.

By working together, an enabling environment is created that fosters the growth and achievement of the Student Teachers. Plan International is grateful for the collaboration and commitment shown by the community members, and we remain dedicated to continuing the efforts to empower young girls and women in the region.

TEACHER TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE GIRLS' EDUCATION



Student Teacher's partners discussing their contributions, © Plan International Sierra Leone



TTIGE community engagement, © Plan International Sierra Leone

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TTIGE?

Read about our work on our website. Click on the button below:

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MEET ADAMA, 22

TEACHER TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE GIRLS' EDUCATION

Adama, 22, lives with her two-year-old boy with her parents in a village in Kailahun District, Sierra Leone. When she became pregnant, her family abandoned her and Adama had to move in with the family of the father of her unborn child. She was struggling working on farms, swamps, doing weeding and harvesting. From this time in her life, she remembers: "I was only seeing the darkest side of my future and it was impossible for me to think positive. There was no way I could further my education due to financial constraint and at the same time support a child."

Becoming part of the TTIGE programme, Adama's life has transformed significantly. The programme has given her access to tutorial classes and arranged work study experience for her in the community school. Adama explains how she has developed as a person and believes in herself more. "Being a Learning Assistant and now a Student Teacher has changed my perception about life as I have developed confidence that there will be light at the end of the tunnel".

Adama is now a role model in her school and children like her so much that they can always count on her. Her outstanding performance during her school placement has inspired the community stakeholders.

"As a woman, I am now encouraging young people to participate and for their views to be respected. By recognizing that everyone especially the young women and girls have great potential we can build their capacity to promote their rights and ability to participate in the development of their communities." - Adama

**"AS A WOMAN,
I AM NOW
ENCOURAGING
YOUNG PEOPLE
TO PARTICIPATE
AND FOR THEIR
VIEWS TO BE
RESPECTED."**

- ADAMA, 22



**WANT TO SEE MORE FROM
THE STUDENT TEACHERS?**

Watch the video now. Click on
the button below:

WATCH HERE



MY HEALTH. MY RIGHTS.

*Girl showing the Girls Get Equal sign,
© Plan International Sierra Leone
Mobile Journalists*

LET'S START TALKING - GIRLS, IN ALL THEIR DIVERSITY, HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE EDUCATED AND MAKE ACTIVE CHOICES ABOUT THEIR BODIES

Did you know that Sierra Leone is one of six West African countries that are part of the My Health, My Rights project, co-funded by the European Union?

This project focuses on making sure young people, especially girls and young women have access to sexual reproductive health services and exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR).

We have forged a partnership with the local non-governmental organization called Sierra Leone Social Marketing and Development Agency (SLaDA) to bring this project to life in the Moyamba and Port Loko districts. This collective effort aims to empower young people (ages 10 - 19), and ensure they have access to the rights and reproductive resources they deserve.



2

Districts



Adolescents
ages **10-19**

Why do we need My Health. My Rights.?

Sierra Leone is facing significant challenges when it comes to realizing sexual and reproductive health rights, particularly for girls and young women. Social and cultural norms and religious beliefs prevent young people from getting accurate information about their sexual development, access to sexual and reproductive health services and making decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

Across two focus areas we are working to create a supportive environment that caters to the specific needs of adolescents. By prioritizing quality Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and improving accessibility to SRHR services, we are taking steps towards a healthier and more empowered future for the youth.

We are empowering young individuals with the necessary information and skills to make informed decisions.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

HIGHLIGHTS



Safeguarding training in Moyamba district, © Plan International Sierra Leone

Safeguarding training

In our efforts to ensure a safe and supportive environment, the MHMR project organises three-day Safeguarding Trainings in the operational areas. This training is designed to equip project participants including nurses, focal teachers and key community leaders who are implementing the project in the communities, with the necessary skills and knowledge regarding safeguarding. Plan International understands the importance of implementing safe programming and wants to empower the participants to effectively address any potential risks or concerns.

By providing safeguarding trainings, MHMR is actively working towards the well-being and protection of all project participants. Their safety is valued and Plan International is committed to creating an environment where they can thrive.

MY HEALTH.
MY RIGHTS.



Staff explaining safeguarding exercise, © Plan International Sierra Leone



A participant presenting during the safeguarding training, © Plan International Sierra Leone

Establishment of School Clubs

The My Health, My Rights Project Officers have been actively visiting schools, laying the foundation for the establishment of school clubs. Engaging teachers and other school officials in a collaborative effort is important to setting up these clubs. The school officials have played a crucial role in identifying dedicated teachers who serve as Focal Teachers.

HIGHLIGHTS



Young people during the MoJo trainign taking pictures and videos, © MoJos, Plan International Sierra Leone

Mobile Journalism (MoJo)

One significant highlight of the project is the mobile journalism training. We conducted the training for 24 young individuals, aged 17 to 24 years, to become Mobile Journalists. The trainees were actively involved throughout the two-day training in each district and were eager to learn new skills.

Mobile Journalism, or MoJo, is an exciting form of digital storytelling that involves creating content using only smartphones. At Plan International Sierra Leone, the program supports young people in enhancing their advocacy, storytelling, and influencing skills through creative media and journalism. In line with our Youth Engagement strategy, this approach empowers young individuals to effectively hold others accountable, communicate their messages, and advocate for important causes such as access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

One participant from Moyamba District shared her experience, saying, "Through this training, I have gained the ability to edit videos, capture high-quality photos, and improve my writing skills. Now, I can tell stories that impact my community using just my mobile phone. Before the training, I used social media just for fun, but now the MoJo training has opened my eyes to the various ways I can utilize social media."

Plan International is incredibly proud of the achievements of these young Mobile Journalists. They are equipped with the necessary tools and skills to create impactful content, bringing attention to the issues that matter most to their communities.



Interview with a young woman during MoJo training, © MoJo, Plan International Sierra Leone

MY HEALTH.
MY RIGHTS.



WANT TO SEE
MORE FROM OUR
MOJOS?

Watch their video now.
Click on the button
below:

WATCH HERE



MEET MUNA

**MY HEALTH.
MY RIGHTS.**

Inspiring friends and changing the game of Mobile Journalism (MoJo)

- Written by Muna, MoJo from Port Loko District

My experience during the 2-day MoJo training - I have learnt a lot. In a summary, I have met new people with the same interests, I have learned how to edit videos and create a story. I learned how to use my mobile phone to publish news and stories about events, incidents, innovation and creativity.

During this training I fully got to understand my potential and my talent. This MoJo training helped me to improve my writing skills, speaking skills, and my learning skills. I'll be able to use little gadgets to do my work as a mobile journalist. This MoJo training has help me understand how to use social media platforms in a different way. This is huge thing for me.

I'll use the knowledge I acquired from this training to inspire friends and change the game of mobile journalist in my country.

**“DURING THIS
TRAINING I
FULLY GOT TO
UNDERSTAND MY
POTENTIAL AND
MY TALENT.”**

**- MUNA, MOJO
IN PORT LOKO
DISTRICT**



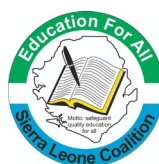
MoJo training in Port Loko, © Plan International Sierra Leone

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AND COLLABORATING PARTNERS



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