

Schools for  
**SALONE**



**2023** —

**IMPACT REPORT**



# A Message from Our Founder

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Dear Friends,

Thank YOU! With your support, 2023 was our best year yet! It was a time of both reflection and growth. Our partners improved education in Sierra Leone, and we are proud of their achievements. Schools for Salone's commitment to local heroes who go the distance has never been stronger.

In 2023 we improved and refurbished existing school buildings and expanded our programs. We built a new vocational school for 81 girls in Kabala and began constructing two schools in last-mile communities. For us, building new schools is just the first step in offering students access to a quality education. We continuously work to ensure teachers have the skills, knowledge, supplies, and enthusiasm to teach; resulting in opportunities for students to attend school every day in a safe learning environment with access to books and learning materials.

We are proud of our advances in supporting our SfS school community libraries with new books and specialized library training for teachers. We increased funding for reading programs and after-school literacy initiatives. Helping teachers attend the Education Ministry's Distance Learning Program continues to be a high priority. Upon completion, teachers earn certificates that are a prerequisite for Ministry-paid salaries. Most importantly, we support teachers in their classrooms with training programs that focus on the basic building blocks of literacy and learning. Students only learn if their teachers are valued and given the skills they need to teach.

Through our commitment to girls, we purchased bicycles to facilitate safe transportation and continued to offer girls reusable, sustainable menstruation kits so they can go to school every day. This year we added health kits for boys and made sure that girls and boys alike receive sexual health education about their changing bodies.

We are excited to welcome our new Program Officer, Allison Sinning, to our team! She is a former Education Peace Corps Sierra Leone Volunteer (2010 -2013) and Gender Program Coordinator with Peace Corps Liberia (2016-2018). Allison has extensive program management experience and brings an enthusiasm and eagerness to continue our work. Her experience in Sierra Leone means she can hit the ground running. I am excited to travel with Allison to Sierra Leone this spring so she can meet and get to know our amazing partners. Stay tuned!

Please look at our 2023 annual report showcasing the year's highlights as we strive to improve learning outcomes, educational access, and equity in SfS communities.

Thank you for being part of our community. We are grateful for your generous support to lift the lives of our students, their families, and teachers in Sierra Leone.

Warmest regards to all,  
Cindy

# Our Vision and Mission

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Vision: A Sierra Leone where **good education is a normal part of every child's life**

Mission: **Advancing quality** education in Sierra Leone through local partnerships

Schools for Salone strives to fulfill its vision and mission through **Three key program pillars:**

- **Fostering Education Access**
- **Advancing Education Quality**
- **Promoting Education Equity**

# OUR IMPACT TO DATE



## Fostering Education Access

- 43 School buildings constructed
- 5 Libraries constructed
- 15,000 Students enrolled
- 27 Water wells constructed
- 45 VIP latrines constructed



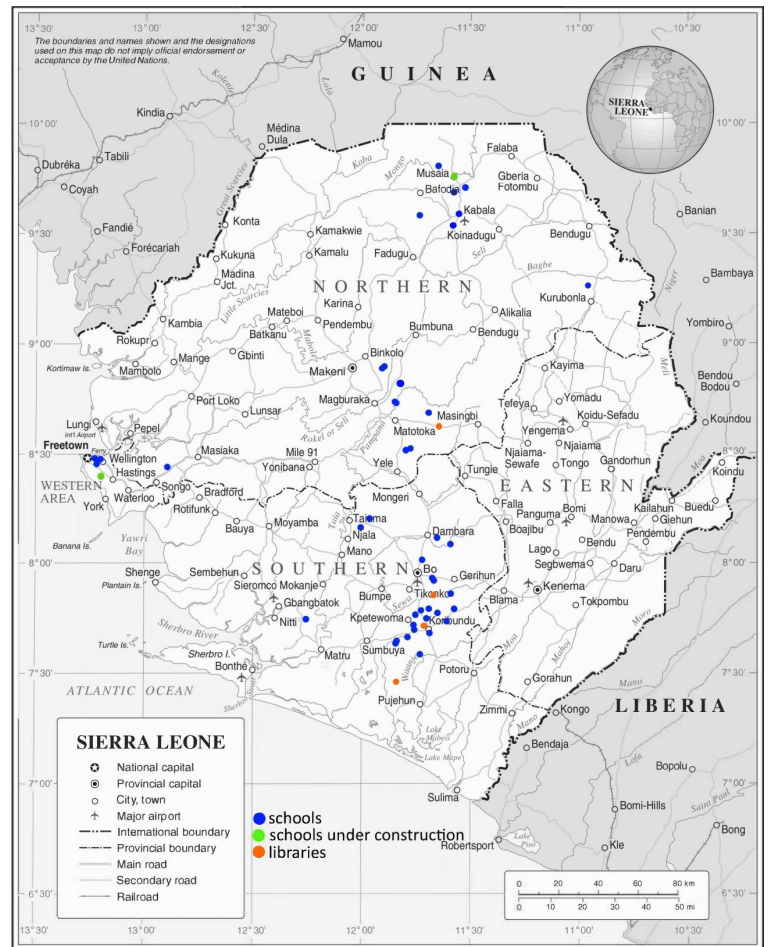
## Advancing Education Quality

- 510+ teachers trained



## Promoting Education Equity

- 46,500+ Menstrual kits produced and distributed
- 23,600 boys and girls received sexual reproductive health education



## A GLANCE AT SIERRA LEONE

- Around 60%, or **2 in 3 people**, live in poverty (UNDP, 2023)
- **60% of youths are unemployed**
- Just under **60%** of those 15 years+ are **illiterate** (UNDP, 2022)

Your generous donations power SfS's commitment to providing children with the best chance of academic success, a globally recognized solution to breaking the cycle of poverty.



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

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## Programme for Children

As a registered NGO in Sierra Leone since 1980, Programme for Children (PFC) has been instrumental in building schools and providing value-added services to expand access to education. PFC fosters quality education by providing scholarships for children and sponsoring teacher training. Collaborating with Sfs, PFC manages the construction of schools in the Southern Province and Western Areas and provides ongoing support by delivering learning materials and sexual reproductive health education. PFC's unwavering passion and commitment drive essential educational projects and services, crucial to the success of Sfs.

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## Uman Tok

Uman Tok (UT – meaning “woman talk” in Krio) is committed to ensuring that no girl misses a day at school because of her period. UT's skilled seamstresses craft reusable menstrual hygiene kits to be distributed alongside quality sexual reproductive health education (SRHE) within partner schools, as well as through a wider network of organizations. This education is essential for empowering teenage girls and boys to understand their bodies, encouraging school attendance. UT has expanded its impact by producing and distributing dignity kits for adolescent boys so that they do not feel left out. This small, but mighty female-led NGO continues to inspire not only students and teachers, but also their workers and partners alike.

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## The Learning Foundation

The Learning Foundation (TLF) enhances literacy and learning engagement through reading programs in schools and libraries, along with after-school initiatives. TLF is a national NGO committed to working with students, teachers, librarians and, specifically, girls in junior secondary school. They also provide professional development training to schoolteachers and more recently have begun a digital e-reader pilot program, allowing students to access hundreds of books. TLF's dedication to quality teaching continues to elevate levels of education within our partner schools.

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## Sierra Leone Book Trust

The Sierra Leone Book Trust (SALBOT), a voluntary non-profit organization established in 2002 is committed to fostering education and literacy in post-war Sierra Leone. Supporting Sfs, SALBOT trains teachers in library services, supplies books to schools and libraries, and implements the Inspiring Readers Program in selected Sfs schools, establishing small library spaces and reading clubs. Over the past two decades, SALBOT has refined its skills, striving to instill a love for reading in children and communities.

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## Clinton Caulker & Salifu Mansaray/SKA Ventures

Clinton Caulker and his dedicated team oversee school construction and renovation projects in Sierra Leone's underserved Falaba and Koinadugu Districts. Beyond infrastructure, they distribute learning materials, sponsor students, and facilitate teacher training for Sfs schools. Their high-quality school buildings have provided invaluable assets, expanding educational access for children who would otherwise miss out. Despite challenging conditions, Clinton and his team remain steadfast in their commitment to serving the North, achieving exceptional outcomes.

# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

## Pillar 1: Fostering Education Access

- One new vocational school for girls built and opened
- Two new primary schools are currently under construction
- 16 classrooms and one library refurbished
- 60 bikes purchased for Laoma and Kambawama Secondary Schools
- 106 students sponsored including 13 college students
- Five college students graduated in December

SfS remains dedicated to exploring innovative ways for students to access education, and in 2023, we continued to deliver meaningful programs.

Building on the success of our collaboration with the Village Bicycle Project in the previous year, we extended our efforts by **purchasing 20 additional bicycles**. This innovation is not just about providing transportation; it empowers more children to **safely travel to and from school**. By reducing dependency on local transport, it not only ensures a secure journey but also mitigates the risks of teenage pregnancy associated with transactional sex.

Your generous donations make these transformative programs possible, collectively impacting the educational journeys of thousands of children over the years.

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## Testimonial

### *An aspiration to lead an exemplary life*

Augusta, orphaned during the civil war, has been sponsored by SfS since 2009, and has now progressed to becoming a student at Njala University. Expressing immense gratitude, Augusta praises her sponsors for their “ceaseless effort and support,” crediting this to her ongoing success and aspiration to live an exemplary life.



## Challenges on the Ground

- Rising prices and inflation challenge our partners to build infrastructure and provide educational projects as increasing costs of construction and learning materials reduce purchasing power.
- Only 5% of the poorest rural girls complete secondary school, while 68% of urban boys from wealthier households do so, highlighting how geographical location and gender continue to marginalize children in Sierra Leone.

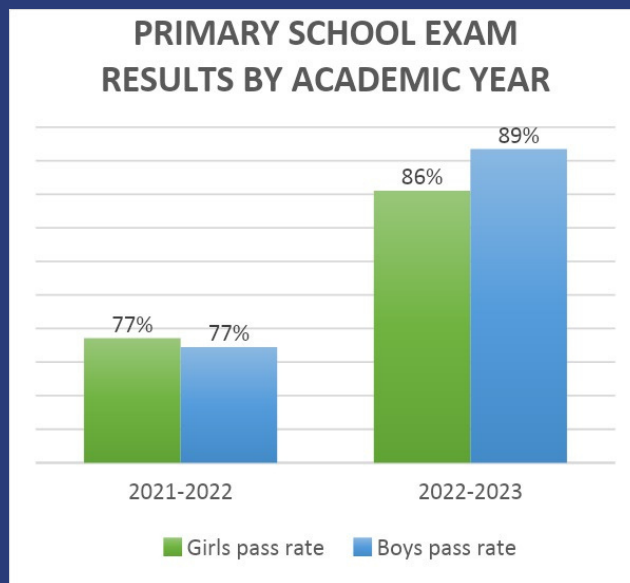
## Pillar 2: Advancing Education Quality

- 135 teachers received literacy training
- 427 students and 19 teachers participated in reading clubs
- Two digital reading clubs started as a pilot program
- 620 children in three schools benefitted from the Inspiring Readers Program
- 12,247 students visited our community libraries
- 8,113 books delivered to Sfs schools and libraries
- 89 teachers sponsored to participate in distance learning teaching certification programs

Exceptional teaching forms the foundation of the high-quality education that Sfs aims to facilitate. It is the cornerstone, ensuring students not only meet but exceed learning objectives. This is why we are extremely proud of our students' remarkable exam pass rates:

- ✓ Class 6 **primary student results increased by an impressive 13%** from the previous year.
- ✓ Junior Secondary and Senior secondary students maintained a commendable performance, just shy of the exceptional 100% pass rate of the previous year.

This success owes itself to the invaluable Distance Learning sponsorship of teachers provided by our partners and the valuable training provided by TLF to teachers and headteachers in Sfs partner schools. As a result, an inspiring **90% of children successfully completed primary school education**, ranking just below the national average; a testament to the transformative impact of quality teaching and dedicated support.



## Challenges on the Ground

- Collecting transparent data from the field continues to challenge Sfs and our partners, as schools lack training, resources and technology to efficiently monitor and report data.
- Many qualified teachers are not yet paid by the government, which has resulted in a higher turnover of teachers, presenting a challenge for our partners to motivate and retain unpaid teachers until they are on the government payroll.

## Pillar 3: Promoting Education Equity

- 1,464 menstrual hygiene kits distributed to adolescent girls
- 1,956 dignity health kits distributed to adolescent boys
- 4,748 boys and girls received sexual reproductive health education
- 74% of student sponsorships are given to girls in our schools

Girls in Sierra Leone face high dropout rates due to added educational barriers such as unequal levels of household chores, teenage marriage and pregnancy. Yet for the second year running, **enrollment of girls within our schools matched enrollment of boys**, thanks in part to Uman Tok's remarkable efforts in supporting girls in education.

Uman Tok's kits offer a **sustainable and reusable solution** to girls' menstrual health needs ensuring no girl misses school because of the perceived shame or lack of suitable products during their period.

Providing **sexual reproductive health education** to boys and girls informs them about the changes and challenges they will experience during puberty, and we are proud that there have been no reported instances of teenage pregnancies since our partners have begun this education within our schools. These **interventions empower girls and enhance their educational success**.

Beyond our schools, Uman Tok produces kits for many larger International NGO's and provides SRHE within other schools. In 2023, Sfs accounted for just 16% of Uman Tok's total kit production.



## Testimonial

*"I thank Schools for Salone for what they are doing for us"*

Mariam faced the harsh realities of "period poverty" until she benefited from the life-changing kit provided by Uman Tok. When she first started her period, her mother suggested she use old "lappa" cloth to replace disposable pads, which they could not afford. She experienced shame and embarrassment as the lappa was not fit for purpose, opting to skip school until her period was over. Since Uman Tok visited her school, Mariam hasn't missed a day at school or been embarrassed of having her period now that she has a discreet and sustainable product to use.

*"I will never absent from school again because of the kits I have received"*

Previously Adama withdrew from her peers and skipped school when she experienced her period because of the perceived taboo. Since Uman Tok visited her school and undertook SRHE education, Adama has learned that it is healthy to talk to her peers and her family about her experiences, freeing her to continue her education throughout her cycles.

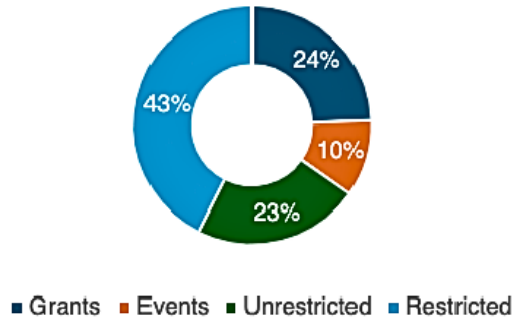
## Challenges on the Ground

- Due to stretched resources, Uman Tok is unable to expand sexual reproductive health education services to parents. Doing so would be especially beneficial for girls as their mothers would receive their own kits instead of potentially having to share.

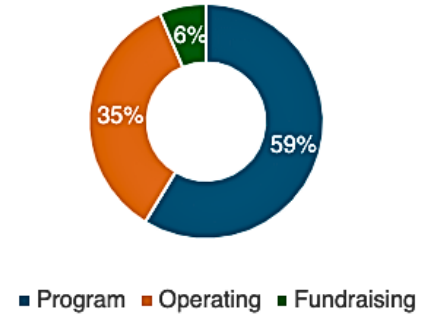


# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Income: \$667,103



Expenses: \$673,822



## LOOKING AHEAD

### *2024 aspirations*

- **Completion of Pentagon and Musaiia Primary Schools, latrines and water wells**
- **Refurbishment of additional schools, classrooms, water wells and latrines**
- **Support The Learning Foundation to motivate and retain teachers to improve learning outcomes**
- **Provide necessary learning materials and sexual reproductive health education to all Schools For Salone partner schools**
- **Raise funds to provide Program For Children a new vehicle allowing access remote and underserved areas**
- **Support and expand library initiatives to promote a love of reading and books**
- **Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and data collection within SfS schools**
- **Strengthen collaboration between our in-country partners**

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**Thank  
You!**



[www.SchoolsforSalone.org](http://www.SchoolsforSalone.org)