



2025–2026 Academic Year Impact Report



Five miles from school, no reliable way to get there, and a family that could not afford okada (motorcycle taxi) fare every day. For Sonnah, a Junior Secondary School (JSS) student at FAWE Secondary School for Girls in Kabala, just showing up was the hardest part. She was late almost every day. She crammed multiple subjects into a handful of notebooks. And like many girls her age, she was navigating puberty alone, with no menstrual hygiene resources and no one to talk to.

Then things changed. A bicycle meant she arrived on time, every day. A full set of notebooks meant she could actually organize her learning. Reusable menstrual hygiene pads and honest education about her body meant she could stop worrying about something that had quietly held her back. And the teachers standing at the front of her classroom were earning their formal certification, sponsored by Schools for Salone, through Sierra Leone's Ministry of Education.

Last year, Sonnah came first in her class.

"Schools for Salone (SfS) transformed my educational experience," she said. "I am going to work even harder this year."

Sonnah's story is not unique. Across Sierra Leone, there are thousands of children for whom the right support, at the right moment, makes the difference between staying in school and leaving it. In the pages that follow, you will see what your generosity has made possible as well as the positive and continuing impact of our vital partners.

Our Impact to Date



20,000

Students enrolled



49

Schools built



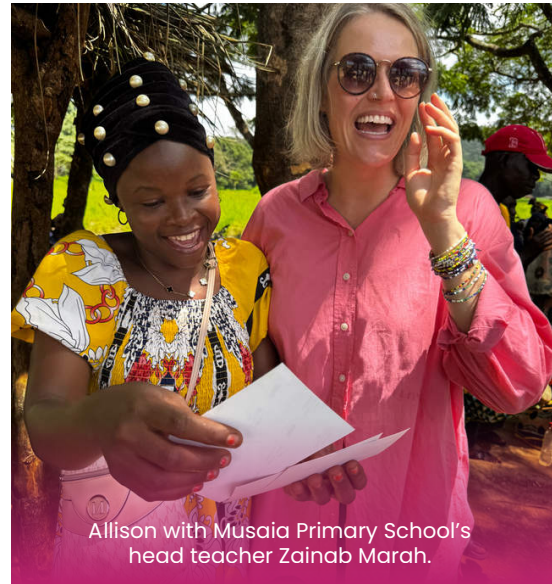
1,000+

Teachers trained

A Message from Our Executive Director

Una Kushe-O,

When I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Moyamba District, Sierra Leone, my neighbor taught me a Mende phrase that has stayed with me ever since – “Klo klo mia ja ve” which means small drops of water make a mighty ocean. It has become my guiding principle. What can we do, “small small”, that supports our Schools for Salone communities? What small investments, made consistently and intentionally, add up to something larger over time? That question shaped how we approached this year.



In 2025, we finalized our 2026–2030 strategic plan, a roadmap built on 21 years of lessons and deep conversations with our partners. This academic year was our first full year putting it into practice. The shift we are making has been gradual, steady, and deliberate. After two decades of building schools, we are asking harder questions about the learning and teaching that takes place inside them. This year, that resulted in 95 teachers deepening their literacy skills across four districts, 841 students reading better than they ever had before, and a 14-year-old girl in Bo biking to school without fear for the first time. Small drops. But we can already see where they are headed.

This kind of shift is not easy. Quality education is harder to measure than constructing a school building and slower to show results. We are still learning what works well, asking new questions, and wrestling with hard ones. What does quality education look like for a child in primary school? For a girl transitioning to junior secondary school? For a student completing senior secondary school in a remote community in Koinadugu? This self-reflection is not a weakness. It's what sets SfS apart as a learning organization, not simply one that reports outcomes.

This report reflects the meaningful progress we made alongside our partners throughout the 2025–2026 academic year. There is still much to do. But small small, we are getting there.

Thank you for being the drops that make this ocean!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison Sinning".

Allison Sinning
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE & MISSION STATEMENT



Schools for Salone is on a mission to give children in last-mile communities access to quality education.

Sierra Leone has made significant progress expanding access to education in recent decades, but access alone has not been enough. Too many children drop out before ever reaching secondary school. Too many of those who stay cannot read a simple sentence by the time they leave primary school. And girls face additional barriers that make staying in school significantly harder than getting there in the first place. Schools for Salone's three program pillars are a direct response to these realities.

Pillar 1: Access to Education – *Every Child Has a Place*

We build schools in the communities that need them most and remove the barriers that keep children from ever walking through the door.

Pillar 2: Quality Education – *Every Teacher Has the Right Tools*

We invest in teachers through literacy training, reading clubs, and certification sponsorships, because a well-equipped teacher is a powerful force for learning in a child's life.

Pillar 3: Girls' Education – *Every Girl Has a Chance*

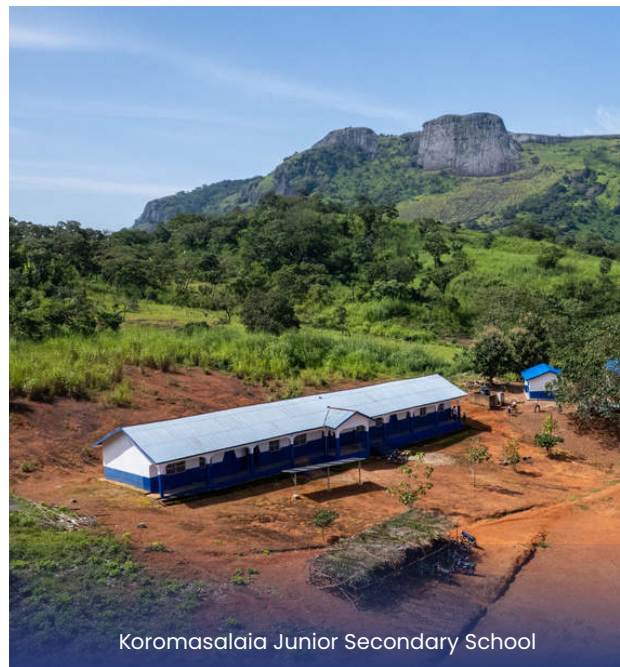
Through menstrual hygiene support and reproductive health education, we address the barriers unique to girls so they can stay in school and focus on their futures.

Pillar 1: Access to Education

Every child has a place to learn

SfS is intentional about where we build schools. Our goal is to ensure every child can complete all twelve years of education as close to their community as possible. This matters especially for girls, who are less likely to relocate for school. That commitment shaped every investment we made this academic year.

This year, our construction focused on Koinadugu and Falaba, among Sierra Leone's most educationally underserved regions. Through our partner Last Mile Learning-SL, led by Clinton Caulker, we built a JSS in Sakuta, only the second in the chiefdom, and added classrooms at primary schools in Kaponpo and Musaia to relieve overcrowding. Together, these buildings will serve an additional 600 students.



Koromasalaia Junior Secondary School

But access isn't always about buildings. Sometimes it's about removing a single barrier keeping a child out of school. This year, over 500 bikes reached students across four districts, reducing long commutes and giving children more time in the classroom.

For girls, the impact goes even deeper. The journey to school can be as threatening as any barrier inside the classroom. Relying on motorcycle taxis exposes girls to harassment and unsafe situations that erode their confidence, hurt their attendance, and in too many cases, push them to drop out entirely.

Across all SfS-supported schools, 8,322 students enrolled this year, a steady increase that reflects both new infrastructure and strong retention in established schools. Getting children through the door is only the beginning.

This Year in Numbers

8,322

Students enrolled

3

New schools built

501

Bikes distributed

Mary's Story — No More Fear on the Way to School

For a long time, Mary, a 14 years old student from Bo, relied on okadas to get to school. In Sierra Leone, these motorcycle taxis are often the only way to travel in rural communities, but for a young girl, the journey was expensive for her family and far from safe.

"Some of the riders made me feel uncomfortable. A few tried to touch me or asked me to come with them after school. I was afraid but felt I had no choice," she recalls quietly.

The experiences eroded her confidence, and she began to consider dropping out. Then she received a bicycle.

"Now, I ride myself to school. No more asking for lifts. No more fear."

Mary's attendance has improved, she is participating more in class, and her parents say she seems happier. She now wants to become a social worker to help protect other girls in rural communities.



Pillar 2: Quality Education

Every Teacher Has the Right Tools

Getting children into school is only the first step. What happens inside the classroom determines whether they stay, learn, and thrive.

Most children in Sierra Leone enter classrooms where teachers have had little formal training in how to teach reading, and it shows. Assessments conducted by our partner The Learning Foundation (TLF) found that most primary students are stuck at the letter recognition level, unable to progress to reading full words and sentences.



Students in Class 5 at Musaia Primary School

TLF's three-level literacy teacher training program is designed to change that. This year, 95 teachers completed training across all three levels in Bo, Tonkolili, Falaba, and Koinadugu districts. The training works. Teachers leave with measurably stronger skills, and post-training school visits confirm those skills are making it into classrooms. SfS also sponsored 33 teachers to earn formal teaching certificates through Sierra Leone's Ministry of Education, giving them credentials that will strengthen their teaching skills and their careers.

TLF also trains teachers to lead after school reading clubs. The clubs give struggling students dedicated time to become confident readers. This year 841 students across 18 schools participated. The data from primary schools tells a clear story. Children in Reading Club schools progressed further, moving from recognizing individual letters to reading full words and paragraphs, while their peers in schools without clubs remained largely stuck at the letter level.

These results reflect what becomes possible when teachers are equipped to teach. Quality education is not just a program goal. It is the cornerstone of SfS's 2026–2030 strategic plan, and the work happening in these classrooms is where that vision begins.

This Year in Numbers

95

Teachers trained in literacy strategies

26

Teachers trained to lead reading clubs

841

Students in reading clubs

33

Teachers in distance learning certification

Idrissa's Story — More than Memorization

Idriss is a Class 3 teacher in Maforeka. For a long time, his lessons followed the same pattern. He talked. His students listened. They memorized what they could and hoped it would be enough. Then he attended The Learning Foundation's literacy training.

Today, Idriss's classroom looks different. Where there were once only lectures, there are now group discussions, interactive activities, and teaching aids that give children something to hold, see, and respond to. His students are participating more, understanding more, and performing better. And Idriss himself is more confident, not just in how he teaches reading, but in how he manages his classroom and plans his lessons.

He is not the only one. Across TLF's partner schools, teachers who once had little formal training in how to teach reading are leaving these trainings with new tools and the confidence to use them.



Pillar 3: Girls' Education

Every Girl Has a Chance

Girls in Sierra Leone face barriers to education that boys simply do not. Without menstrual supplies, many girls miss weeks of school each term. Without community support, a girl's education is often treated as optional. And the transition from primary to secondary school, precisely when puberty hits, is when dropout risk is highest. Schools for Salone's work through Uman Tok address these barriers directly, and the results are showing.

This academic year, girls' enrollment in Sfs-supported schools exceeded boys' at junior and senior secondary levels. Behind that number are thousands of menstrual hygiene kits, hundreds of conversations about puberty, sex and menstruation, and a growing community of parents who understand that their daughter's education is not negotiable.



What makes Uman Tok's approach distinct is who they bring into the conversation. This year, the program reached girls and women across 14 schools in four districts with sexual reproductive health education and menstrual hygiene kits. But it also engaged boys, fathers, and male community members, because lasting change requires everyone. Joseph, a father in Kadanso, arrived at a workshop skeptical. "I used to believe that educating children about sexual intercourse would encourage them to practice it," he said. "But after the session, I now understand that it actually helps them make better decisions." He is not alone. Across the communities Uman Tok serves, fathers and brothers are leaving these sessions with a different understanding of their role in keeping girls safe and in school.

This year, Uman Tok reached over 5,300 girls and women and more than 3,200 boys and men with sexual reproductive health education and distributed over 2,800 menstrual hygiene kits. When a girl does not have to worry about her period, she can focus on learning.

This Year in Numbers

2,890

Menstrual hygiene
kits distributed

5,815

Students participated in
sexual reproductive health
education sessions

2,746

Adult family
members engaged

Three Voices— What Changes When Everyone Is in the Room

"I was afraid to ask questions about relationships and changes in my body. Auntie Mariatu made it easy for me and most of us here to talk freely. I now know how to protect myself and avoid bad decisions and I will also protect my younger sister."

– **Aminata, student at FAWÉ.**



"In our culture, we don't usually talk about these things with children. I used to feel uncomfortable discussing sexual matters with my daughter. But during this session with Uman Tok, I realized how important it is to guide our children early."

– **Mariama, mother in Musaia.**



"I used to think that being a real boy means you must have many girlfriends. My friends used to pressure me. During the session, I learned about responsible behavior and the risks of early sex. I also learned about being respectful to girls. Now I understand that I can focus on my education and future"

– **Ibrahim, student at Makali.**



OUR PARTNERS

The People Behind the Work

Schools for Salone works through Sierra Leonean partner organizations. This is not just a program strategy. It is a founding principle. Local leaders are the reason our work endures, and over the past year each of our partners has grown stronger. The strength of this network is what makes us optimistic about the years ahead.



Last Mile Learning-SL (LML-SL)

Formalized 2025 | Koinadugu & Falaba Districts

Clinton Caulker has been building schools in some of Sierra Leone's most remote communities since 2019, reaching the districts that others rarely do. This year, Clinton formally established Last Mile Learning-SL as a community-based organization, a milestone that reflects his long-term commitment to this work. Clinton builds more than schools. He builds connections and trust, and he works collaboratively with communities to help people invest in their own children's education. That community ownership is what makes the schools he builds last.



Programme for Children (PFC)

Partner since 2005 | Bo, Moyamba, Tonkolili Districts & Western Area

PFC has been part of this work since the very first school was built in 2005, making them Sfs's longest-standing partner and one of the most deeply rooted organizations in our network. This year, PFC reopened their office in Bo District, a meaningful step that strengthens their field presence. As SfS enters a new strategic chapter, we are working closely with PFC to determine how our partnership evolves in the years ahead.



Uman Tok (UT)

Established as independent NGO 2020 | Falaba, Koinadugu, Tonkolili and Western Area

In five years as an official non-profit, UT has distributed over 50,000 reusable menstrual hygiene kits and reached more than 26,000 individuals with sexual reproductive health education. This year, UT welcomed three new volunteers to assist with field education and are working towards piloting student health clubs and community groups for long term impact in communities where they work. Under Juliet Rhoman's leadership, UT is deepening its work in rural communities at exactly the moment the international development sector in Sierra Leone is contracting, which is filling a gap that matters enormously for girls' education.



The Learning Foundation (TLF)

Partner since 2014 | Falaba, Koinadugu, Tonkolili, Bo Districts & Western Area

TLF spent years developing and field-testing its literacy programs. This year, it began to scale them. With a new literacy program coordinator and administrative and finance staff now in place, TLF trained 121 teachers and ran reading clubs in 18 schools, with a clear plan for reaching more. Saio Marrah and the TLF team are one of the clearest examples of what local capacity-building looks like when it works.

FY2025 FINANCIALS

Where your support goes

Donations to Schools for Salone reached new heights in 2025. Annual revenue exceeded one-million dollars for the first time in our 21 year history. Restricted gifts earmarked for 2026 school construction projects, along with private foundation grants, fueled that growth.

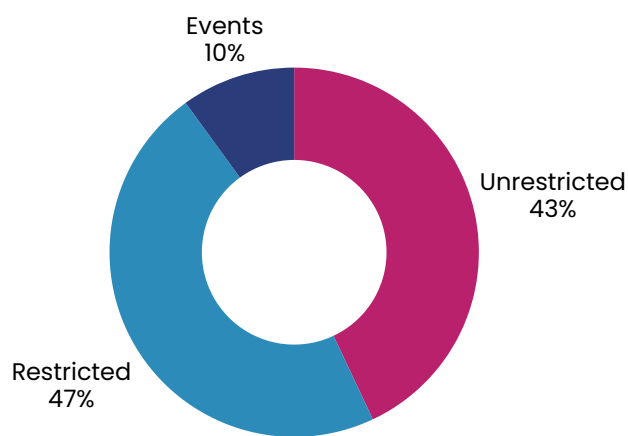
The households who gave in 2025 showed remarkable generosity, many increasing their gifts meaningfully, and it was their commitment that carried us to this milestone.



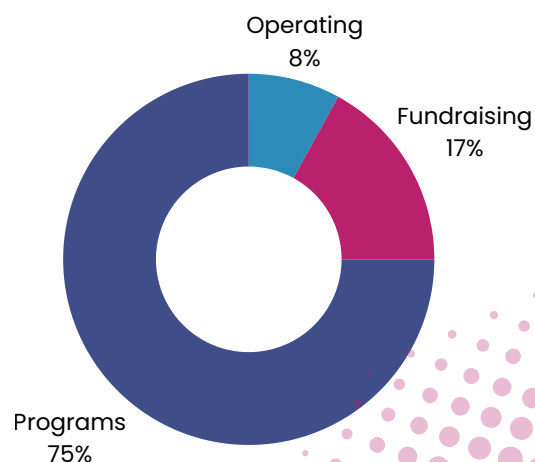
We are also mindful that our donor community was smaller than in 2024's record year, and welcoming more households back into it is something we care about deeply. Every household represents a relationship we value and want to sustain.

Schools for Salone does not receive federal funding. Our work in Sierra Leone depends entirely on donors like you — individuals, families, and private foundations who believe that access to quality education changes lives. That is as true in 2025 as it has ever been.

Income: \$1,017,163



Expenses: \$837,776



LOOKING AHEAD

Our 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan

Twenty years ago, Schools for Salone opened its first school with a simple mission: to expand access to quality education in Sierra Leone. That mission has not changed, but our approach to achieving it has evolved. Our 2026–2030 strategic plan reflects two decades of lessons learned and deep conversations with our partners, and charts a clear course organized around three interconnected objectives.

OBJECTIVE 1

Enhance Quality Education and Student Outcomes

We are shifting our emphasis from building schools to improving what happens inside them. That means investing in teacher training and certification, expanding literacy programs, and building assessment systems to track what is working.

OBJECTIVE 2

Strengthen Education Access and Equity by Addressing Community-Level Barriers

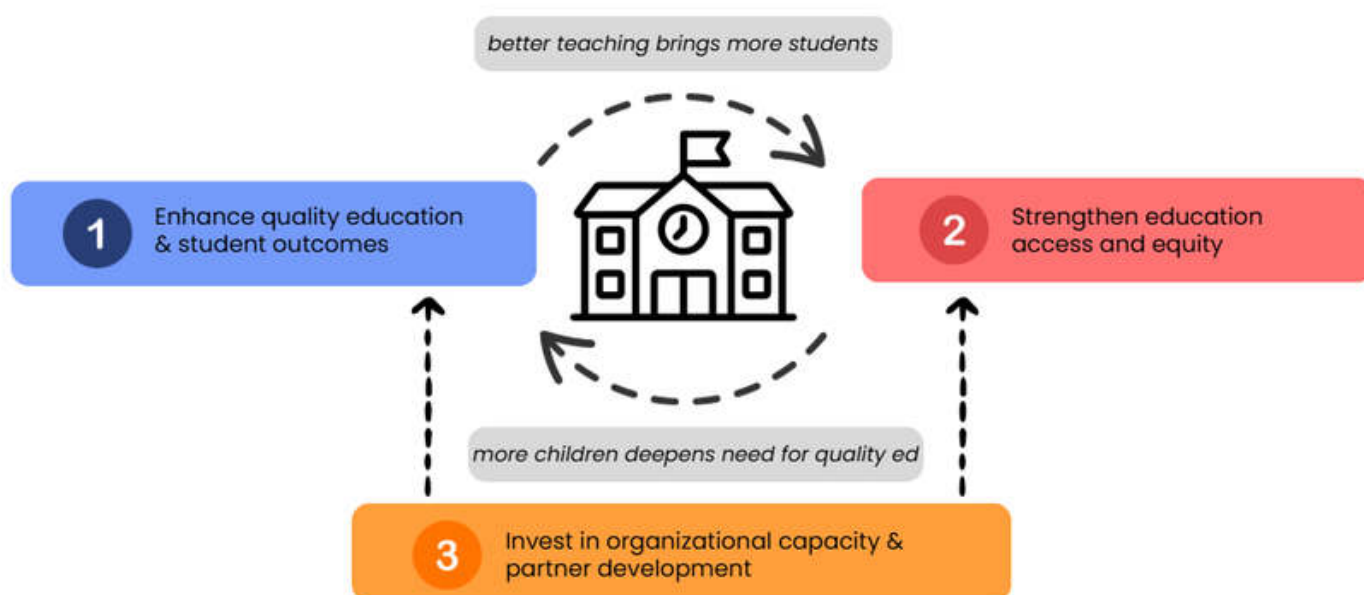
We are expanding access beyond school construction to the barriers that keep children out of the classroom. That means building strategically, distributing bikes for long commutes, and giving girls the resources and support to stay in school.

OBJECTIVE 3

Invest in Organizational Capacity and Partner Development

None of this works without strong partners. We are investing in stronger teams and better systems so the organizations closest to school communities can reach further and deliver on this plan.

These three objectives work as a cycle. Better teaching keeps children in school. More children in school deepens the need for quality teaching. And strong partners make the whole cycle possible.



Thank you for your support!

*Every child in Sierra Leone deserves a quality education.
Help us make it happen!*



Photo by Betty Press

\$60 — one bike for a student walking more than three miles to school every day

\$100 — ten menstrual hygiene kits that keeps girls in school for a full year

\$250 — one term of learning materials for one school

\$500 — one sponsorship for a teacher to gain their teaching certification

\$1,500 — one term of teacher literacy training through The Learning Foundation

Any amount — every gift helps us reach children in a last-mile communities in Sierra Leone

We are deeply grateful for every donor who chooses to invest in this work, whether through a recurring gift, a donation from a donor-advised fund, an IRA distribution, a gift of stock, or by including Schools for Salone in your long-term plans.

Every gift makes a difference. It is what keeps a reading club running in Bo, a girl riding her bike safely to school in Tonkolili, and a school being built in a community in Koinadugu that did not have one before. Thank you for being part of this.



www.SchoolsforSalone.org