



ONE GIRL

**IMPACT
REPORT**
2025

Acknowledgement of Country

One Girl would like to acknowledge the First Nations People of Australia as the custodians and traditional owners of the land and waters where we work and live.

For tens of thousands of years, the women of this land have been the primary keepers of knowledge, culture, and community. They have been the first educators and stewards of a sophisticated system of learning that has sustained the oldest living culture on earth.

We acknowledge that education is not just about books and classrooms; it is about the stewardship of identity and the agency to lead. Just as we work to empower girls in Sierra Leone to become change-makers in their own communities, we honor the strength and resilience of First Nations women who continue to lead, educate, and inspire here.

We pay our respect to Indigenous Elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.





Contents

Message from Board Chair & CEO	3
Message from Programs & Partnerships Director	4
Why Girls?	5
Princess' Story	7
2025 Impact at a Glance	9
The Team	11
Beyond the Classroom	13
A Father's Commitment	15
Our Gratitude	17
Financials	18

Message from One Girl's Board Chair and CEO



Scott Gordon,
Chair

Throughout 2025, One Girl has been defined by a singular, unwavering focus to ensure that every girl in our program has the agency to determine her own future. We have dedicated ourselves to sharpening our strategy, strengthening our foundations, and deepening our delivery and measurement of impact in Sierra Leone. And it's working!

Central to this evolution has been a significant investment in our leadership and governance. We are thrilled to welcome our new Program and Partnerships Director Sia Lajaku-Williams, and strategic advisors from Sierra Leone who ensure our program is informed by those with lived experience. We have also strengthened our board, adding four new members whose diverse backgrounds in international development, human resources, law and the Sierra Leone diaspora community is already driving higher levels of accountability and innovation. This refreshed governance framework ensures that every dollar raised is treated as a direct investment into a girl's potential.



Emma Hess,
Chief Executive Officer

As we look towards the coming year, we are laser-focused. We know our work remains as critical as ever. We are expanding our reach to more girls than ever before, moving beyond access to prioritise achievement and agency.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for being part of the One Girl story. Whether you've donated, partnered with us, or shared our mission, you are a vital part of this journey. We can't do this work without your invaluable support. Together, we're taking the steady, continuous steps required to break the cycle of poverty and open doors for girls and young women in Sierra Leone.

OUR MISSION

One Girl is on a mission to break down barriers so young women and girls can access quality education, in and out of the classroom.

We believe that education is a lifeline and one of the most powerful instruments to reduce poverty, improve health and wellbeing, mitigate the climate change crisis, and ensure gender equality.

Message from One Girl's Programs and Partnerships Director

Sia Lajaka-Williams, Sierra Leone

In my years leading programs in Sierra Leone, I have seen many initiatives come and go. But One Girl is different, it is a promise that doesn't break when life gets hard.

This year, that promise was recognised on the national stage. I am incredibly proud to share that One Girl received an Award for Service Excellence, a prestigious honor from Sierra Leone Association of NGOs (SLANGO). This award validates One Girl's commitment, high-integrity, and high-impact model your generosity makes possible.

Beyond the accolades, the true win is the daily safety net you provide. When we delivered 1,110 lunch packages or replaced a student's materials after a crisis, we weren't just delivering supplies. We were telling these girls, "Your education is worth protecting". Thank you for standing with us, believing in our girls' leadership, and making this award-winning impact a reality.

The SLANGO Award for Excellence in Service is Sierra Leone's highest NGO honor.

Presented by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, it celebrates our unwavering commitment and leadership in feminism. This award is a national validation that One Girl provides exceptional service, respected by the government and the Sierra Leonean community alike.



Sia with One Girl students



One Girl staff receiving the SLANGO Award

Why Girls?

Educating a girl transforms her future and everyone's around her.

When a girl stays in school, everything changes but for too many girls, the path to secondary education is blocked by forces far beyond their control.

Around the world, 122 million girls are out of school, and in Sierra Leone, the odds of completing secondary school remain dangerously low. Only around 17% of girls finish secondary school in Sierra Leone, meaning the majority are pushed out before graduation, not because they lack ambition, but because the barriers in front of them are overwhelming.

For many families, poverty creates impossible choices. When food prices rise and incomes fall, education becomes a luxury they cannot afford. The hidden costs of uniforms, transport, books, and meals are often out of reach.

Girls are frequently the first to be withdrawn from school when money runs short, expected instead to work, care for younger siblings, or support household survival.

In Sierra Leone, only 17% of girls complete secondary school.

Distance and safety also pose serious risks. Secondary schools are often far from home, requiring long journeys on unsafe roads. Girls face harassment, violence, and exploitation while travelling to and from school, making attendance dangerous rather than empowering. Deep-rooted gender inequality continues to limit girls' futures. Early marriage and teenage pregnancy remain widespread, with around 40% of girls married before the age of 18, forcing many to abandon their education permanently. Once a girl leaves school, returning is rare.

These barriers do not just interrupt education – they close doors. They strip girls of opportunity, limit earning potential, and reinforce cycles of poverty that affect families and communities for generations. Without targeted support, too many girls will never reach the classroom, let alone the graduation stage.

39%

**OF GIRLS IN
SIERRA LEONE
ARE MARRIED
BEFORE THEIR
18TH BIRTHDAY.**

When girls stay in school, everything changes.

When you educate a girl, everything changes. It's called the ripple effect.

When a girl is educated, her health, status, income and entire future changes for the better, and she will be more likely to educate her own family.

She will have opportunity, choice and agency and she will have the confidence and knowledge to make informed decisions about herself, her future and her family. And her community will benefit too!

Plus, educating girls is the number one way to fight climate change and create a fair and sustainable planet for all.

At One Girl, we leverage the power of education to create positive change for girls and young women in Sierra Leone.

We provide the essentials

Uniforms, textbooks, sanitary pads, solar lights, and lunch money. Girls can attend school with dignity and confidence.

We build life skills

Monthly meetings give girls space to speak up, build self-worth, and learn about health, leadership, and financial literacy.

We offer trusted support

Our field officers stay by each girl's side, offering care, mentorship and encouragement through every step of her journey.

We challenge harmful norms

Through education and conversation, we work with schools and communities to dismantle the attitudes that hold girls back.



Princess' Story

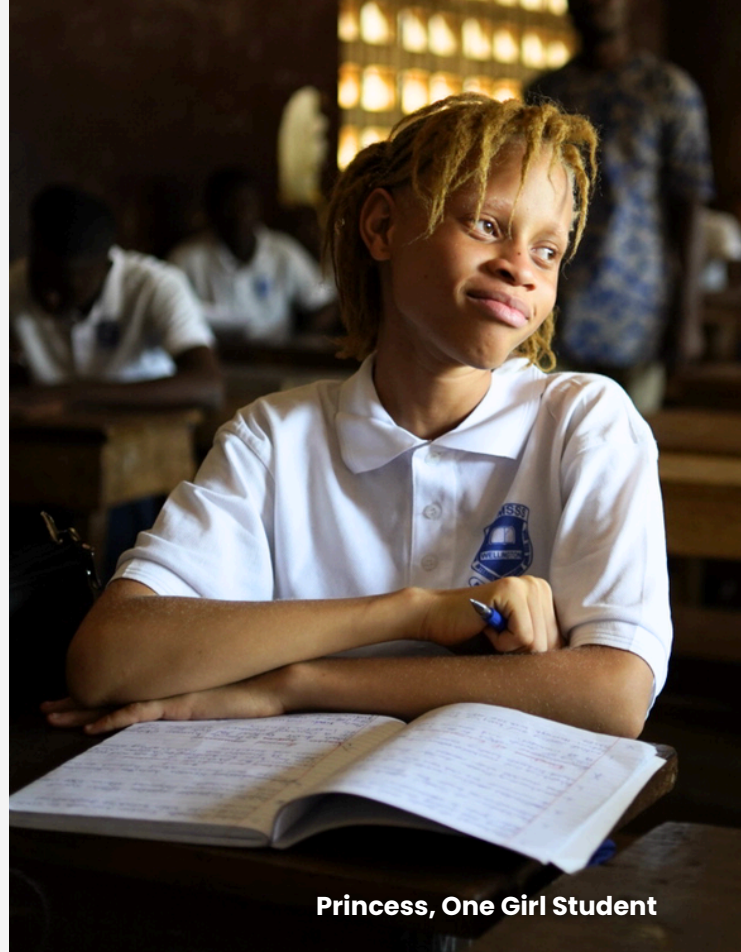
At 14, Princess is growing up in the Wharf Community in Sierra Leone, where flooding, poor sanitation and limited access to healthcare are part of daily life. She lives with her mother and siblings in a one-room home, where finding space and time to study is a constant challenge.

Princess also lives with albinism and has faced ongoing bullying at school due to stigma and discrimination. Despite this, she continues to go to school.

With support from One Girl, Princess now has access to school supplies, learning materials and a strong support system.

“They have helped me in being confident, in being strong and in being myself.”

Princess, One Girl student



Princess, One Girl Student

At home, her mother Ruth has seen this change firsthand. Ruth is raising her children alone after experiencing sexual and gender-based violence. Supporting her family has not been easy, and there were times when keeping Princess in school felt uncertain.

“The cost of living is not easy – if not for them (One Girl) I wonder how Princess would have managed with her education. It’s not easy for me, and she is eager to learn.”

Ruth, Princess' mother

With this support, the pressure on Ruth has eased. She has seen her daughter grow in confidence, stay focused on her education and believe in her future.

When a girl like Princess is supported to learn, the impact reaches beyond the classroom. It strengthens families, and creates change that extends through the wider community.



Princess and her mother Ruth



“

Thank you for enlightening me to chase my dreams, to be strong, and to be a lioness. And for building my confidence and for loving us, for accepting us as girls.

Princess

2025 at a Glance

We provide holistic support to girls by helping to break down the financial, cultural & social barriers they face in accessing their right to education.

Here's how we did this in 2025.



Supported 111 girls

Provided access and support to complete secondary education in Sierra Leone.



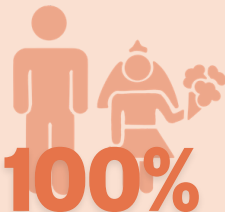
Sanitary pads supplied

This essential support ensured girls could attend school without interruption.



Monthly meetings

Meetings empowered students with knowledge on sexual health, internet safety, financial literacy and more. Helping them challenge norms and dream big!



100% Of students remain marriage-free

Despite national statistics showing 13% of girls are married before the age of fifteen.



Students sat the university entrance exam

Eight students gained a university place in 2025.



Schools partners

We partnered with 14 schools to deliver our program and ensure girls had consistent support in their learning environments.



Alumni mentors

These amazing role models have been engaging and supporting students during their monthly meetings.



Saved per family

Supporting the cost of education and easing financial pressure on households.



Female staff

80% of our staff are female across Sierra Leone and Australia.

When you educate a girl, *everything* changes.



100%

Menstrual health literacy

Every student can manage their period with confidence and stay in school.



21%

Students in leadership roles

One Girl builds confidence and empowers girls to lead in their schools.



15

Focal teachers

One Girl trains and funds teachers to support our students in partner schools



13

Guest speakers

Delivered sessions that inspired, informed and encouraged girls to build confidence, leadership and future aspirations.



1,110

Lunch packages provided

For all students every school day. For many the only meal they will eat all day.



100%

Students remained enrolled

Compared to a 57% dropout rate for girls nationally.



\$2,250 AUD

Funds one student for a year

Covering school fees, supplies, and the support she needs to succeed.



42

School visits

Regular school visits allowed our team to check in with the students, provide support and stay closely connected to their progress.



111

Back-to-school kits

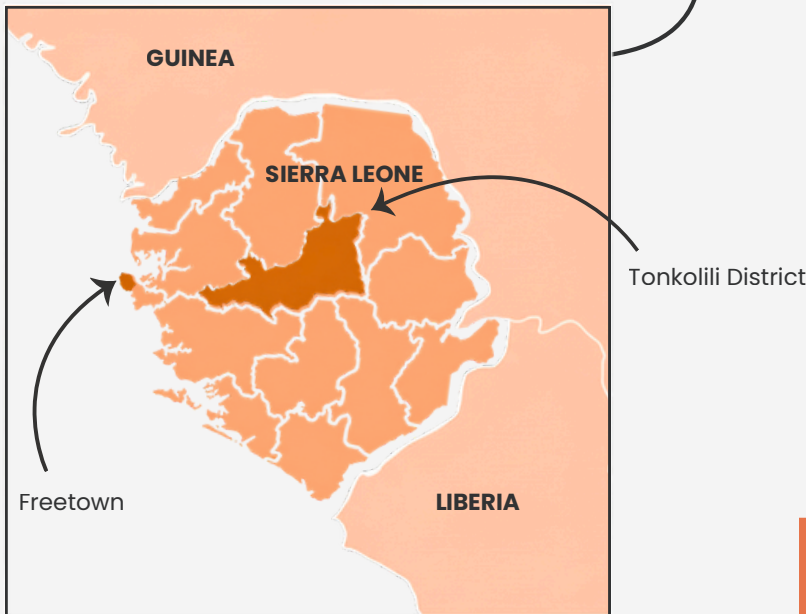
Each kit included uniforms, shoes, stationery, school bags, textbooks, and solar lights to ensure the girls had everything they needed.

The Team

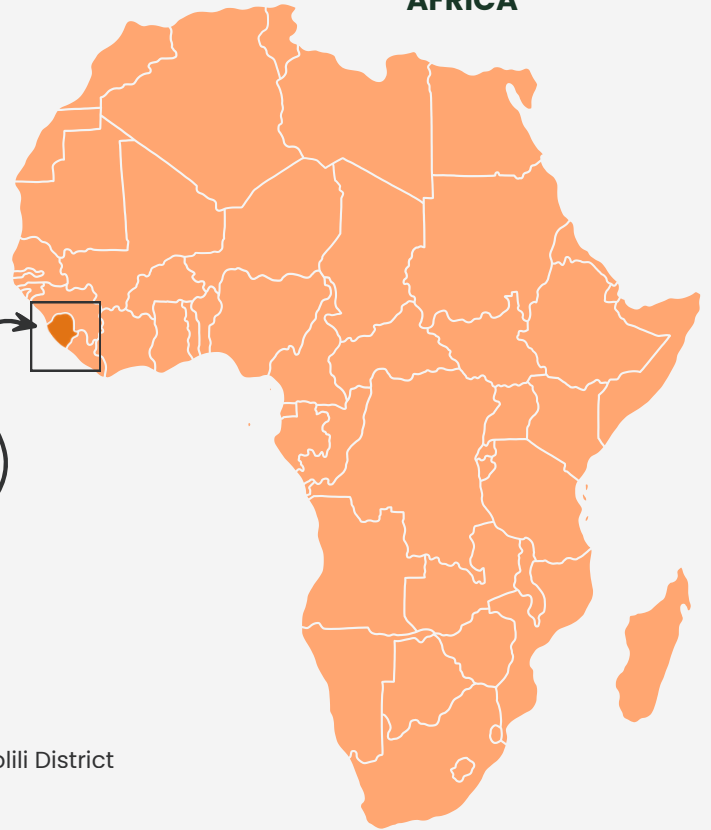
Sierra Leone

Our **programs** in Sierra Leone are locally led and grounded in the communities we work alongside.

Based in **Freetown** and the **Tonkolili District**, our team delivers support directly to girls and families, ensuring our work is shaped by local knowledge, context and lived experience.



AFRICA

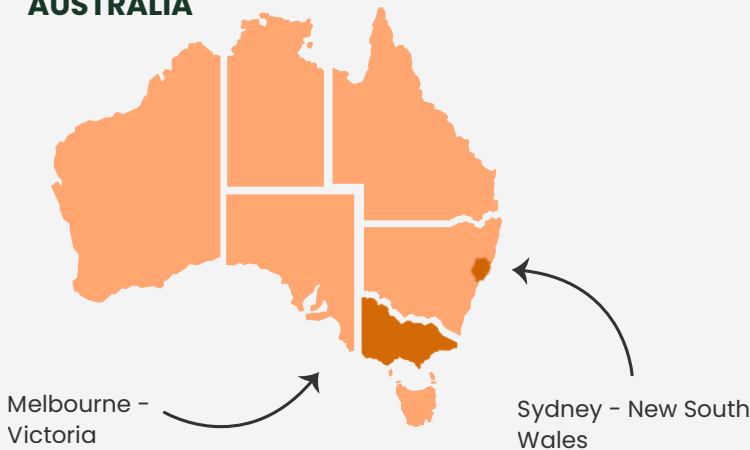


Australia

Our **fundraising** and **operations** are based in **Melbourne**, Australia, supporting the delivery of our programs in Sierra Leone.

Our work is overseen by a **Board of seven members** across Melbourne and Sydney, providing governance and strategic direction, alongside the guidance of our Board Advisors.

AUSTRALIA



One Girl Board Advisors

Our Board Advisors bring deep expertise, lived experience and a shared commitment to advancing girls' education. They use their knowledge and leadership to shape our decision making and keep it grounded in the realities girls face.

Each Advisor brings a unique perspective shaped by their work across advocacy, international development and community leadership.



Fatmata Borboh

Fatmata's journey reflects what is possible when a girl is supported to learn and lead. Once a One Girl student, she is now a Senior Project Officer at She Can. We Can. She leads programs focussed on economic empowerment and gender advocacy in Sierra Leone.



Nicky Coker

Nicky brings a global lens through her role as Spokesperson at the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, helping connect local impact with international advocacy.



Josephine Kamara

Josephine is a girls' rights advocate and communications leader. Through her work at Purposeful and as founder of Women of Wonders, she has spent over a decade supporting girls' education and leadership.

Together, our Board Advisors play a critical role in shaping the future of One Girl. They strengthen our strategy, challenge our thinking, and ensure our work continues to centre the voices and experiences of the girls and communities it exists for.

Beyond the Classroom

At One Girl, we know that a scholarship alone isn't enough to change a life. For a girl in Sierra Leone, the path to graduation is often blocked by a complex web of financial, cultural, and social barriers. If she is hungry, she cannot focus. If she lacks sanitary supplies, she stays home. If she doesn't feel safe or empowered, she may never realise her own potential.

This is why our model is built on full wrap-around support. We don't just open the school gate; we ensure she has everything she needs to walk through it with confidence.

In 2025, we saved families an average of AUD\$620 in educational costs in a country where the average annual salary is only AUD\$820. By providing uniforms, textbooks, and university entrance exam fees, we ease the crushing financial pressure on households, especially during the current cost-of-living crisis. When the hidden costs of education are removed, a girl's seat in the classroom becomes secure.



One Girl students participating in a tie-dye workshop focused on skills development and entrepreneurship.



Monthly meetings feature guest speakers and activities to empower and inspire the students

Attendance is the first step toward achievement. Girls often stay home when they have their periods, which can mean they miss up to 20% of a school year. This year, we supplied 13,320 sanitary pads, ensuring that menstruation never becomes a reason to miss school. By addressing menstrual hygiene and health, we protect a girl's dignity and her right to a continuous education.

Our support extends far beyond physical supplies. Through our Monthly Meetings, students are engaged in sessions covering everything from sexual health and internet safety to financial literacy and small business initiatives. These meetings, supported by our 13 alumni mentors, are where the real transformation happens. Here, girls find their voice, learn their rights, and begin to dream big.

The results speak for themselves: in a country where only 17% of girls complete secondary school, One Girl students had a 100% completion rate in 2025, and our students continue to outpace national averages in university placement. By providing holistic, wrap-around care, we aren't just supporting students, we are nurturing the next generation of Sierra Leonean leaders and change-makers.

“We learn about skills and how us as young ladies, as women, are able to stand up for ourselves by using the skills, the talent we have, without depending on anybody else.”

Jeneba, One Girl student



One Girl student at a monthly meeting on sexual and reproductive healthcare

A Father's Commitment

In the farming community of Roruks in Sierra Leone, where tradition often shapes opportunity, one father chose a different path.

Ibrahim is a farmer, a community member, and a father who believes his daughter, Kadiatu, deserves an education.

In Roruks, it is common for girls to leave school early. Some are kept home to help with chores, while others are prepared for early marriage. Education for girls is often seen as optional.

“I don't want my daughter to depend on anyone for survival. Education will give her choices.”

Ibrahim, Kadiatu's father



Kadiatu and her proud father

AN EDUCATED GIRL
WILL REINVEST

90%

OF HER INCOME BACK
INTO HER FAMILY

While others questioned his decision, Ibrahim stayed committed. He remained closely involved in her schooling, regularly checking in with teachers and supporting her learning. His commitment did not stop there.

Ibrahim began supporting other girls in his community who were at risk of dropping out. He monitored their attendance, encouraged their studies, and worked with teachers to keep them on track. As a result, all four girls remained in school, with improved attendance, confidence and performance.

One Girl engages with students families to encourage them to join us to support their daughters education.

“When you educate a girl, you educate a family and a community.”

Ibrahim, Kadiatu's father

His story shows that change can begin at home. When fathers support girls' education, it strengthens families and opens the door for more girls to learn.



A family processes harvested crops outside their home in a rural community in Tonkolili District



Thank You

To our community of donors, supporters and partners:
thank you.

In a year where the global economic outlook has often felt uncertain and precarious, your commitment to One Girl has been the steady hand that kept our students at their desks. Because of you, 111 girls in Sierra Leone didn't just stay enrolled – they thrived.

Your support creates a ripple effect we can now measure: 20% higher wages, 6x lower child marriage rates, and a 90% reinvestment back into the community. You aren't just donating; you are developing the next generation of leaders to steer Sierra Leone to a brighter future.

Whether you've been with us for fifteen years or fifteen days, thank you for trusting us. You are the heartbeat of this mission.





Financials

Read our 2025 Financial Statements below.

[2025 Financial Statements](#)

Thank you for being here with us,
and for continuing to support
our work.

Love,
the One Girl team



Support our work

If you would like to support our work, please visit onegirl.org.au or call +61 404 233 368 .

All donations of AU\$2 or more are tax deductible.

When you educate a girl, *everything* changes.

ONE GIRL

