



OUR WORK IN 2021

Including our accounts for 2020



Fatmata has won a place at university in Freetown to study media and mass communications. She was the first student we sponsored eight years ago (see Page 3). Her primary school head, Haja Khadija, told us then *'This girl was top of her class. Now two years later she sits in the village doing nothing because her grandmother has no money to send her to school. Can you help her?'*

Our approach

We are a small charity. With about £25,000 this year we have changed the lives of some of the poorest children in Sierra Leone, one of the world's poorest countries. The adults who care for the children we support live on less than £1 per day.

We cannot abolish poverty in Sierra Leone but we have brought education, dignity and the hope of a better future to around 110 children and young people this year.

We believe our focus on education contributes to the country's development in a small way by ensuring that some of the most able children grow into future professionals, role models and leaders in their communities. Already, after just eight years' work, we are seeing some of the children we have supported become young men and women, ready to inspire others to access education. Three of them have joined us as volunteers, travelling to remote villages to find children who cannot walk and taking them mobility equipment.

We employ no paid staff, have no office and own no vehicles. Our eight UK trustees claim no travel expenses. Our wonderful Sierra Leone volunteers receive modest travel expenses but no fees or salaries. We keep running costs to an absolute minimum; even this report is printed for us by a donor and our postage costs are met by another donor.



Support for Tertiary Education

We supported Fatmata's secondary education (pictured on front cover) and a group of four friends have now offered to pay her university fees for three years (about £500 each year). There is no loan scheme in Sierra Leone.

Chair of the Trustees, Kevin Curley adds: *'The first time I met Fatmata after our sponsorship began was unforgettable and very moving. She was sitting on the roadside with her books under a street light because there was no electricity in her home. She and her grandmother were totally committed to her education. It's a huge pleasure now to see her going to university. She is already a great role model for girls in her village and I'm sure she is destined to become a community leader in the future.'*

Every student we sponsor now receives a solar powered light, a chair and a small table for study at home. No more sitting on roadsides under street lights.



Alie (pictured left above) and Zoro have also done well in secondary school and started university courses, both supported by our donors. Alie is studying Peace and Conflict Studies. Zoro is studying medicine.

Trustees consulted a sample of our donors before deciding to pay university fees for our successful secondary school students. 30 donors responded and there was a large majority in favour of continuing to support our students after school in either university or vocational training. Concerns were expressed by some that we should not reduce our focus on secondary education and this is our resolve. Several donors are now contributing to our 'tertiary education fund'. This year's cohort of three university entrants and three more likely to qualify in 2022 will all be supported by generous donors for the lengths of their courses.

Please get in touch if you would like to support one of our students to continue their education after school. £400 (£33 each month) plus gift aid enables a young person to go to university. Part sponsorship is also welcome.

In 2021 we achieved these things:

- We met the cost of secondary school education for 37 young people. Each one performed very well in the national examinations at the end of primary school but could not continue in education because of poverty.

Although the Sierra Leone government has abolished secondary school fees, money is still needed to buy uniform, shoes, exam fees, textbooks, pens, to pay teachers for extra lessons and to travel to school. Our first school graduates Fatmata, Alie and Zoro have told us that having a set of textbooks for all their subjects has been a vital factor in their success at examinations.



Isata and Foday are sponsored so that they can go to secondary school. Isata is holding a tub of cakes which she sells in the village after school in order to help her grandmother who cares for her. Our students are resilient and determined.

23 of our sponsored students are boys and 14 are girls. We are striving for a better balance but it's not easy. Girls under perform in primary school because they miss school for several days every month because of inadequate toilets. And they are sometimes made to stay at home for domestic duties.

- Sometimes we have met other needs so that education is not impaired. For example, we have paid for small solar lights so that our young people can study in the evening: most of our students come from homes without electricity. We have also paid for mosquito nets

to help our young people avoid getting malaria. We provide our students with a small table and chair so that they can study at home. Typically, it costs £240 to sponsor a child's secondary education for one year.

- We have provided mobility equipment for 36 children and young people who cannot walk. Most of the children we help have been disabled by polio. Some have been injured in vehicle accidents. During the long civil war up to 2002 polio vaccines were not delivered to the villages. Even after the war ended it took several years to re-establish the vaccination programme. There are many young people who will live with the consequences of polio for the rest of their lives. Sadly this year – for the first time since 2014 – some cases of polio have been reported in villages. It looks as though the impact of covid has diverted some funds away from the vaccination programme.

In 2021 we achieved these things (continued):



Our volunteers take mobility carts from our store in Tombo on the mainland first to the coastal village of Shenge and then on to the island of Shabro – a sea journey of 10 hours.

- Our volunteers have continued to search for disabled children in remote villages and then take ‘mobility carts’ (an adapted tricycle which a child can ride with their hands), wheelchairs and crutches to them. This equipment transforms the lives of the children and their parents or carers. It enables a child to get to school without crawling through the mud or sand or being carried by their mother. School attendance improves markedly and social life can be enjoyed with friends. For less than £200 a girl or boy is empowered and their life is enriched. Sometimes the cost is higher if, for example, our volunteers need to hire a boat to carry mobility equipment to a remote island village.

- This year trustees decided that the provision of artificial legs and arms to children who have suffered amputations would be treated as ‘mobility equipment’. It’s clear to us that giving a child a new leg has as much positive impact as providing a wheelchair. This year we funded five new legs and one new arm.



Alfred (pictured left with volunteer Alpha) lost his arm when he was a young boy as a result of a wall collapsing on him. His new arm has given him new confidence and his teacher says his school performance has improved too.



In 2021 we achieved these things (continued):

- We continued to support the Mustard Seed Foundation's children's home in Moyamba. This wonderful, loving home is one of only two homes in Sierra Leone which cares for disabled children who are orphans or who have been abandoned by families. It is run by the dedicated Roselyn Freeman whose mother Deborah founded the home. Sadly this year at the age of 82 Deborah passed away. Almost until her death she played and cooked with the children every day.
- Of the 28 children who live at Mustard Seed, nine are severely disabled. We paid for two extra care workers to support these children and train them in simple personal tasks such as going to the toilet. The salary cost is £1800 for 12 months.



- We have responded quickly and sensitively to unusual requests. For example, one of our volunteers came across Steven (pictured above) in a village near Bo, the second city of Sierra Leone. Steven had a diseased foot and the only treatment he could be given was amputation which saved his life. We supported his mother so that Steven could get rehabilitation and a new artificial leg. Volunteers will keep in touch and Steven's leg will be adapted or replaced as he grows. He is now able to go to school.
- We also held a special appeal this year so that Sulaiman (pictured right), one of our sponsored students, could have a major operation to save his leg from amputation following a bicycle accident. 17 donors contributed £2,000 in just three days. Sulaiman is doing well, his leg was saved and he no longer has chronic pain but it's likely that another operation will be needed.

Sulaiman is always cheerful and positive despite his badly damaged leg. He is doing well at senior secondary school and has now joined us as a volunteer. He cares deeply about disabled children and searches for them in villages near his home.



Our Sierra Leone Volunteers

Eight of our volunteers make up the Sierra Leone Committee which meets with Chernor Barrie in the chair. The Committee's responsibilities include selecting the children to receive support to go to secondary school and considering applications for financial help from our students. The Committee also recommends new projects for support to the UK trustees. The Committee has got off to a great start, bringing the insights of Sierra Leoneans in to the heart of the charity's decision making. The Committee will have an increasingly important role and is a key part of our future sustainability.

Without our eleven brilliant volunteers we would not be able to achieve much in Sierra Leone. Our leading volunteer is Chernor Barrie. We call him our 'country representative' so that he has some status when visiting officials and local chiefs on our behalf. Chernor is studying law at FBC, the leading university in Sierra Leone.



Volunteer Umu is now our Deputy Country Representative

Kevin Curley, the chair of the trustees, met Chernor by chance in a tea room on the island of Shabro in 2016. Chernor was keen to be involved and Kevin immediately saw his potential. He really is a star with a huge, generous heart and permanent optimism whatever the challenge.

Umu Turay (pictured left) is Chernor's deputy. She is studying engineering at university in Freetown. She has special responsibility for the support we are giving to students in the top class at Kroo Primary School. Kroo is the most disadvantaged community in Freetown.

Our other volunteers are Fatima Sheriff, Foday Conteh (pictured below), Abdul Sheriff, Sulaiman Bah, Yahya Jelloh, Alpha Joseph, Alhusine Kalokoh,

Roselyn Freeman and Sulaiman Sesay.

Both Foday and Abdul bring the insights and experiences of disabled people to our work.

Sulaiman Bah is training to be a Community Health Worker and Yahya has just graduated with a degree in Peace and Conflict Studies. Roselyn runs the Mustard Seed Foundation children's home. Alpha, Alhusine and Sulaiman Sesay are in their late teens or early twenties and are school students.

Our volunteers receive no fees. When they travel on behalf of the organisation we pay their travel and subsistence costs. Using the UK national minimum wage we have calculated that the 'value' of our volunteers' work exceeded £60,000 this year.

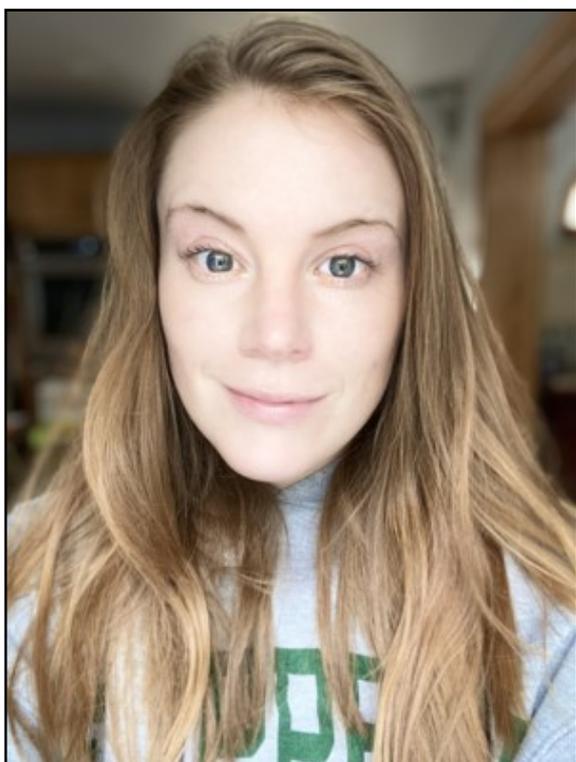


Foday (on the left above) often travels to villages to look for children who cannot walk. He found Adekalie crawling and brought him a wheelchair from Freetown. Adekalie's arms are too damaged to use a mobility cart.

Our Trustees and UK Volunteers

We have 8 trustees. Kevin Curley CBE is our Chair and the founder of the charity. Mike Martin MBE and Mike Clemson are also founding trustees. All three had long careers in the UK voluntary sector and are now retired.

Ralph Steen owns Stag Geological Services and brings business experience to the trustee board. His company is a generous donor. Rachel Curley is a senior officer in the National Education Union and brings her enthusiasm for education to the board. Katherine Curley joined the board in 2019. She is a primary school teacher and also has a keen interest in international development work. She's also by a long way our youngest UK trustee!



Tumi VanRiper (pictured left) joined us this year. She is a project manager in the USA. Chernor Barrie, our volunteer country representative, is also a trustee and joins us for our discussions through Zoom.

Our work in the UK is supported by some great volunteers. Mike Batchelor looks after our website and James Holt and Laetitia Verel manage our Twitter and Instagram pages. David Burnby edits and publishes this report.

Laetitia lives in France and was recruited to help us by her Chinese friend who is married to the British son of one of our donors. They met in Tokyo when learning Japanese. Big planet, small world!

UK trustees and volunteers receive no expenses. Kevin Curley travels to Sierra Leone at his own expense each year (though not in 2021 because of the pandemic).

Our Donors

138 people have donated to our charity since we began. 43 people are 'monthly donors', giving us a donation every month direct to our bank, Triodos bank. In 2021 'monthly donors' contributed just over £12,000 to our funds, including gift aid refunds. This support is invaluable, enabling us to plan ahead in confidence.

If you like what we are doing please consider becoming a 'monthly donor'. Simply go to www.sierraleoneaid.org.uk and click on the donate button on the home page.

Our Donors (continued)

We know that the best way to get support from a new donor is by word of mouth. Please ask one of your friends or family members to support our work. Show them this report. **Just £10 each month means that we can support another child.** Of course, we also welcome 'one-off' donations.

This year we received donations from Germany and Tanzania. And for the first time a Sierra Leonean donated money so that we could buy another wheelchair. In Sierra Leone people support their extended families, their churches and their mosques. Donating to charities is largely unknown.

Several people have organised fundraising events for us recently including a sponsored cycle ride and donations in lieu of birthday gifts. Please think of a way in which you could support us. Would you also consider leaving us something in your will so that our work can continue into the future?

Mark Simms and Hannah Thoresby donated laptops from their companies. These will enable our university students to prosper. Few university students in Sierra Leone have a laptop. It will make a real difference to their performance.

We have consulted a sample of donors twice this year about difficult questions facing the UK trustees. We are very grateful to the many donors who took the trouble to respond giving us their views.

We are doing amazing things with small amounts of money. It's only possible because you support us. Thank you.



All the Small Things...

This year we paid for water containers and soap so that children in residential homes can wash their hands. In Sierra Leone, most people haven't yet been vaccinated, so access to hand washing is the first line of defence. It's often the small things that can make a massive difference. (Picture: Children at the Mustard Seed Foundation Children's Home in Moyamba)



Sierra Leone Education and Development Trust

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Sierra Leone Education and Development Trust

Receipts and Payments in 2020

Receipts	£
Donations from individual supporters including Gift Aid	19,647
Triodos bank interest	2
Easy fundraising	163
The Bart Caulker Foundation	<u>500</u>
TOTAL	20,312

Payments	£
Support for secondary school students	4,192
Support for disabled students and adults	7,708
Support for Mustard Seed Foundation children's home ¹	2,475
Website hosting fee, domain names and other fundraising costs	202
Triodos bank charges including foreign transfers ²	359
Sierra Leone volunteers' travel expenses and subsistence costs ³	298
COVID-19: food, soap, protective clothing, emergencies	3,282
Registration with Ministry of Welfare , postage, copying, phone ⁴	<u>469</u>
TOTAL	18,985

Funds held at Triodos bank at year end ⁵	5684
Funds held in Sierra Leone	623

Accounts have been prepared in accordance with UK charity law and Charity Commission guidance. Our accounts for 2021 will be available in January 2022. Please contact us if you would like to see them.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- 1. This amount includes advance payment of part of the salary of a care worker who supports severely disabled children.*
- 2. We have to pay a foreign payment charge of £25 each time we transfer funds to Sierra Leone.*
- 3. Our eleven wonderful volunteers receive no payment for their work. We meet their travel costs when they are visiting students and transporting disability equipment. Sometimes they travel to remote villages and on those occasions we also meet the cost of simple overnight accommodation and food. We also refund their phone costs.*
- 4. Registration of the charity with the Ministry of Social Welfare in Sierra Leone is essential to enable our volunteers and UK visitors to explain the charity's status to Immigration Officers and local Chiefs. It is the equivalent of Charity Commission registration in England.*
- 5. At the end of 2020 we had £5,684 in our Triodos bank account. The policy of the trustees is to reserve £5,000 so that we can fulfil our commitments to the students we support in the event that income falls in the future*