

## YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

Thanks to your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Port Loko. Learn more about the valuable ways your support has benefitted.

This past year, a focus on education is helping all children, particularly girls and children with disabilities, return to the classroom to learn and thrive. Teachers and parents learned more about gender equality, and more than 200 young women completed their training to become teachers themselves.

Young people improved their knowledge on their sexual and reproductive health and are now able to recognise and stand up against gender-based violence.

**We know the best is yet to come and your sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Port Loko.**



# 228

Young women supported to become teachers



# 12

Community leaders now support girls' education



# 96

Volunteers trained on life skills coaching for youth



## COVID-19'S IMPACT IN SIERRA LEONE

**Hear from Fatmata about how COVID-19 has impacted her community.**

“During COVID-19, it was difficult to access hygiene supplies to manage my period. Plan International supported us with hand washing stations and dignity kits. With this support and knowledge on the use of sanitary pads and hand washing, I can now go to school and feel more comfortable even during my menstrual periods.”

# CASE STORY: ABILITY TO THRIVE



**NAME: SALLIEU**  
**AGE: 10 YEARS OLD**  
**HOBBY: MUSIC**

“I am very happy to be in school with my friends, and my teacher is very helpful. I believe, I can achieve my dream of becoming a banker.”

## Meet Sallieu

Like your sponsored child, Sallieu has been empowered by Plan International to change his life. Sallieu lives with his grandmother and uses a wheelchair to get around his rural village. He's currently in primary school and dreaming big for his future. And with the right support, Sallieu's disability is no longer a barrier to reaching his full potential.

## Overcoming Roadblocks

Sallieu's school is far from his home, and he has to cross three streams to get there. His grandmother often goes to help him across, but her ill health and farming activities mean she's not able to take him every day. Other children take the same route, but never offered to help.

Children with physical disabilities are often left behind, and many, like Sallieu, experience bullying from peers and teachers. But a new project is working to ensure all children can learn in safe and inclusive environments.

Sallieu joined a children's club at school, where he was able to meet other students, share experiences and build relationships. And children learned how to be more inclusive and supportive of those with different abilities.

## Feeling Supported

Teachers at Sallieu's school also took part in training sessions on how to foster a more inclusive learning environment. They are ensuring children with disabilities are included in classroom activities and can thrive.

His teacher says: *“If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow.”*

Sallieu is now feeling more supported to continue his education. His new friends help him get to school every day, and he feels happier and more confident learning his lessons and joining in games.



Sallieu is enjoying being at school with his friends

**WE CURRENTLY WORK WITH 10,000 CHILDREN IN PORT LOKO**

# OUR PROJECTS IN PORT LOKO ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

**Around 60% of young women have experienced physical or sexual violence.** Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage are still common. These practices are a violation of girls' rights and prevent girls from reaching their full potential.

In 36 communities, positive parenting sessions on children's rights and child protection reached more than 400 mothers, fathers, and caregivers. And 120 teachers and school management committee members also learned more about gender equality and how to support students who have experienced gender-based violence.

Children and young people also completed training on how to identify forms of violence and where to go to for support. 100 children and youth learned how to report incidents of abuse and now have the skills to support each other and stand up for their rights.

Children and youth are standing up against harmful traditional practices

## SUPPORTING EDUCATION



**During the COVID-19 pandemic, most schools in Port Loko were closed.** Children lost out on their education and girls were vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Many students have not returned to the classroom, leaving them without the skills they need to thrive as adults.

To help support all children continue their education, awareness raising campaigns on returning to school were held in communities once schools re-opened. Distance-learning options were also available to those who did not feel safe coming back.

Teachers also completed training on how to make schools safe and inclusive, helping both girls and children with disabilities get the support they need to open the door to a brighter future.



"I dropped out of school at 13 after I became pregnant. My boyfriend abandoned me, and my family sent me away. I was in a dark place. Thankfully Plan took care of me and my baby and supported my education. Today I am a proud and qualified teacher."

**- Mabinity (23) from Port Loko**



## FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



**58%**

Of people do not have access to safe water



**62%**

Of girls do not graduate school



**30%**

Of girls are married before the age of 18



**Your support helps girls and boys to stand up for their futures.**

- Early pregnancies remain common. We will ensure youth have the sexual and reproductive health knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their bodies.
- We will also promote girls' rights and raise awareness of the harms of traditional practices like female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- More than half of girls in Port Loko do not finish school. We will support schools and teachers to create inclusive and gender-friendly learning spaces, and work with parents to encourage girls' education.
- Limited access to safe water and sanitation continues to impact on the lives of children. We will repair or construct new water wells and promote healthy hygiene habits.

**We know the best is yet to come, and together we will continue to work for a brighter, happier future for the children in Port Loko.**



“On behalf of children and their families, I want to share my thanks and appreciation for your tremendous support in changing the lives of children and young people. Next year we will reach more children with education, training, and healthcare.”

**Umu Kpange**  
Programme Area Manager, Port Loko