I AM SOMEONE

SIERRA LEONE COUNTRY OVERVIEW

2007 – PRESENT

4 Children's Villages • 2 Primary Schools
• 2 Secondary Schools • 4 Water Wells
100s of children supported in school each and every year

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INTRODUCTION

When Sierra Leone came calling in 2007, there was no ignoring the pull. Then ranked the third poorest country in the world and reeling from the scars of a brutal 11-year civil war, the need for deep, lasting support was undeniable. The conflict not only shattered lives but also devastated the country's agricultural systems, infrastructure, healthcare, and education. Nearly two decades on, communities are still rebuilding—with resilience, but with minimal resources.

At I Am Someone, we saw an opportunity to make meaningful and transformative change. Our response began with the creation of our very first Children's Village—an innovative model that would go on to shape our work in Uganda and Kenya. These micro-villages offer at risk children a safe and loving home, with access to food, health care, education, and psychosocial support.

Since then, our work has grown to span the length of the country, from the capital's rubbish tips to the coastal outskirts of Freetown to some of the most isolated communities in the rural north. The children we serve are often orphaned due to illness, childbirth complications, accidents, or even snakebites. Many live without any family support network or have elderly grandmothers or extended family who struggle to provide for them. Without intervention, these children face the very real threat of exploitation—through child labour in agriculture, domestic servitude, or early marriage.

Despite being one of the world's largest sources of diamonds, the communities of Sierra Leone rarely see the benefit of the country's natural wealth. Rural poverty is entrenched and widespread, and basic services like clean water, sanitation, and healthcare remain out of reach for many.

Poverty and child marriage go hand in hand—but so does education and change. Every year, we support children not only through primary and secondary education but also into university and vocational training, helping them rewrite the narrative of their futures.

At the heart of this transformation are the primary and secondary schools we build and fund. These schools are completely free for all children to attend, regardless of their background or ability to pay. Often, they are the only schools available for kilometres, meaning children who would otherwise have no access to education can now learn close to home. In many cases, children walk long distances just to attend. These schools are not just places of learning—they are the heart and hope of their communities, providing safety, structure, and opportunity in regions that have long been overlooked.

KEY STATISTICS

LITERACY RATE (AGE 15+):
43% overall
52% for men
37% for women.

Only 52% of children complete primary school, and just 33% complete secondary education.

Child marriage: 30% of girls are married before the age of 18.

60% of the population lives in extreme poverty
(ON LESS THAN $1.90/DAY).

Only 58% of Sierra Leoneans have access to clean drinking water.

Yet amidst the hardship, there is hope—and we are proud to work hand in hand with local agencies, elders, and community leaders to identify and protect children most at risk. Our approach is always locally led, deeply respectful, and grounded in partnership.

Our greatest success is that some of the children originally taken into our care have now completed university and returned to work at our centres as qualified social workers. Their lived experience informs and drives our work. Our programs are proudly run by Sierra Leoneans.

But we don't just invest in children. We invest in their families and communities too—bot just by building schools ;but also water wells, increasing food security, investing in microbusinesses, and establishing health initiatives. Whether it's offering rice loan schemes to elderly carers, or helping community groups start bakeries, farms, or poultry projects, our aim is to lift the entire community from deep poverty—together.

We are a key employer in the regions where we work, and the changes we foster are not temporary—they are generational, transforming lives now and for years to come.

OUR PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

KAMAKWIE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

- Children's Village Capacity: 30–60 children
- Primary School: 250–450 students
- Secondary School: 200–300 students
- Local Staff: 1 female project manager, 3 female carers, 1 male social worker, 2 security guards
- Teachers: 21
- Infrastructure: Dormitories, water well, milling centre, reintegration home, solar power, container shop
- Income Projects: Milling, rice loan scheme, duck rearing, cassava and yam farming

TOMBO CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

- Children's Village Capacity: 30–45 children
- Local Staff: Project coordinator, 1 social worker, 3 carers, 1 security guard, - Infrastructure: Dormitories, water well, composting toilets, bakery, solar power
- Income Projects: Bakery, chicken project, ducks

SAMAYA CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

- Children's Village Capacity: 20–25 children
- Primary School: 150–250 students
- Secondary School: 120–200 students
- Local Staff: 1 social worker, 3 carers, 1 security guard,
- 9 primary school teachers
- Infrastructure: Dormitories, school buildings, toilets, solar power
- Income Projects: (Development pending)

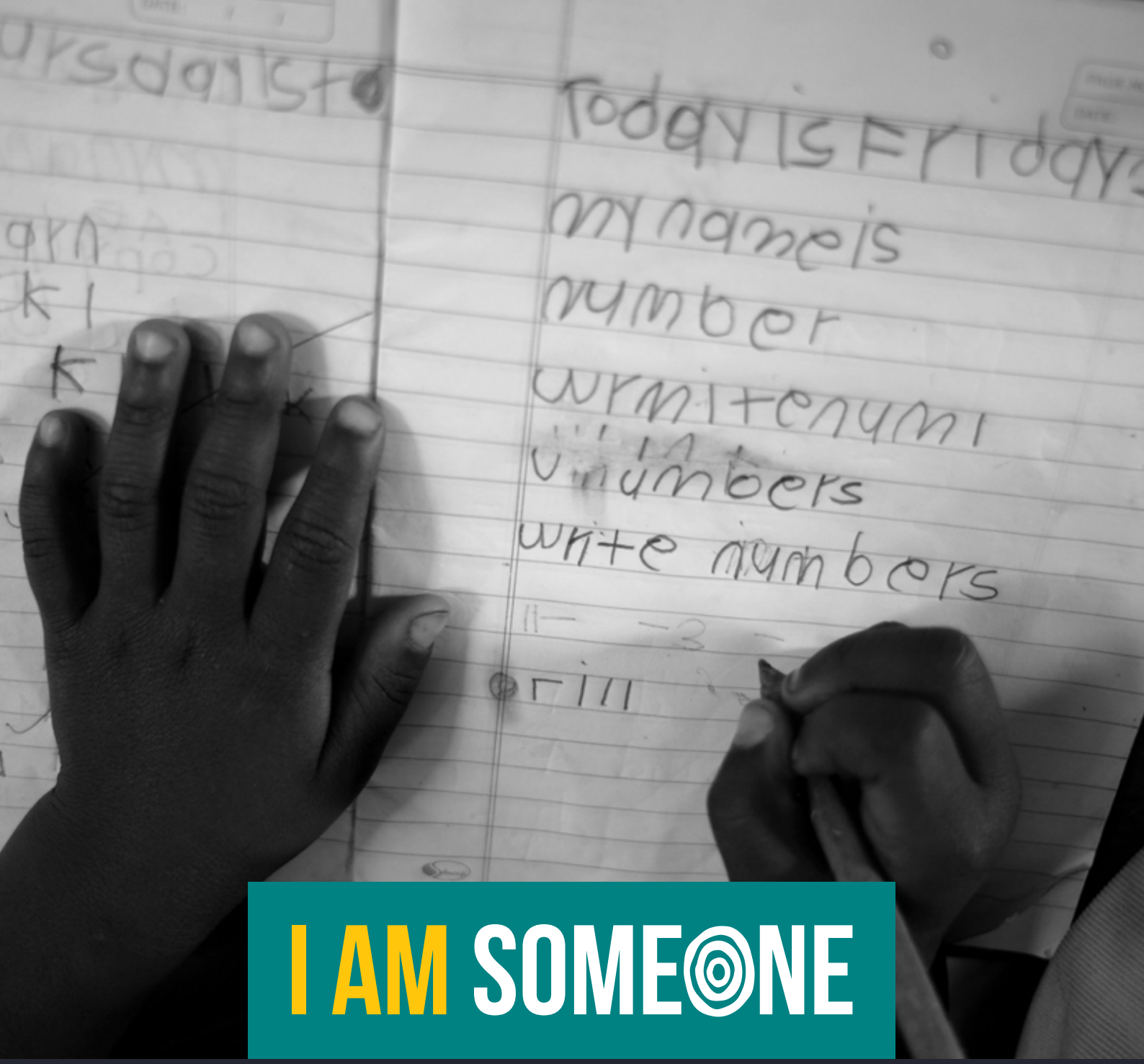
MADINA OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Started: 2022
- Children Reached: 20
- Local Staff: 1 social worker
- Services: Outreach support for vulnerable children in remote areas

OUR IMPACT IN SIERRA LEONE

SINCE 2007, OUR WORK HAS INCLUDED:

- 4 Children's Villages Established (Kamakwie, Tombo, Samaya, and Madina).
- 2 Primary Schools and 2 Secondary Schools built and operational.
- 4 water wells constructed to improve clean water access.
- 21 local teachers and dozens of carers, social workers, and security staff employed across our projects.
- Sustainable farming, milling, and poultry initiatives launched to boost local income and food security.
- Children supported through to tertiary education every year—many for the first time in their family's history.



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