

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a group of young children, likely in a classroom. In the foreground, a young girl with a wide smile is looking towards the camera. Behind her, another girl is also smiling. To the left, a boy is looking off-camera with a slight smile. Other children are visible in the background, some looking down. The children are wearing orange and blue uniforms. The ActionAid logo is in the top right corner, and the title '2025 ANNUAL REPORT' is in the bottom right corner, overlaid on a red and grey geometric design.

actionaid

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Content

➤ Executive Summary.....	pg 2
➤ Acronyms.....	pg 3
➤ 2025 at a glance	pg 4
➤ Country Context	pg 5
➤ 2025 Achievements : Programme Priorities	
● Fostering diverse opportunities through inclusive and empowering education	pg 6
● Enhancing inclusive and participatory governance	pg 9
● Promoting climate resilience and sustainable livelihood	pg 13
● People Reached	pg 17
➤ Resourcing Our Work Through Strategic Anchors	
● Programme Effectiveness & MEAL	pg 19
● Fundraising	pg 21
● Financial Management & IT.....	pg 22
● Human Resource & Governance	pg 23
➤ Challenges & Learnings	pg 25
➤ Stories of Change.....	pg 26

Executive Summary

In 2025, Sierra Leone recorded moderate macroeconomic recovery, with inflation falling to its lowest level since 2014 and GDP growth projected at 4.4%. Despite these gains, vulnerability remained widespread, with 13% of households experiencing food insecurity and a further 65% classified as moderately food insecure. Communities also faced significant social, climatic, and governance challenges, including the escalating Kush drug crisis, a public health emergency caused by the Mpox outbreak, and ongoing political and governance reforms. Within this complex environment, ActionAid Sierra Leone (AASL) continued to advance its mission of promoting inclusive education, participatory governance, and climate resilience while strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities.

AASL made notable progress in expanding access to quality and inclusive education. 27,814 adolescent girls participated in safe space sessions that built their life skills, confidence, and leadership capacities. Through child sponsorship programmes, over 8,000 children remained in school despite economic challenges affecting many households. The organization also strengthened support for children with special educational needs by training 150 teachers, while investments in school infrastructure, digital learning, and positive parenting initiatives contributed to safer and more supportive learning environment for children, especially girls and other marginalized groups.

The organization further promoted participatory governance by empowering young people, civil society organizations, and communities to engage in decision-making and demand accountability. Training reached 90 youth council members and 135 civil society representatives, strengthening their advocacy and leadership capacities. Community scorecarding processes and public budget presentations enhanced transparency and citizen participation. Gender equality and women's empowerment remained central to these interventions through sustained advocacy and policy engagement.

AASL also strengthened climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods by equipping communities with the skills and resources needed to respond to environmental and economic shocks. The organization trained 200 young people and 20 grassroots organizations on climate governance, supported women in agroecological farming activities, and facilitated Village Savings and Loan Associations that benefited 150 women. In response to the Mpox outbreak, over 24,600 people received awareness-raising and hygiene support. Youth-led climate action initiatives, tree planting activities, and environmental education programmes further expanded across districts.

Overall, AASL directly reached 152,095 people, 57% of whom were female, including 2,106 persons with disabilities. The organization achieved an income of £2.2 million, slightly above target, while expenditure increased to £2.39 million to support expanded programme delivery. Although challenges such as climate vulnerability, migration of sponsored children, and a shrinking donor landscape persisted, AASL continued to adapt and learn, demonstrating the importance of community participation, strong government partnerships, and flexible programming in sustaining impact and advancing resilience across Sierra Leone.

Acronyms

AASL - ActionAid Sierra Leone

BECE - Basic Entrance Certificate Examination

CoP - Community of Practice

CSO - Civil Society Organization

CSP - Country Strategy Paper

DDCC - District Development Coordination Committee

DPRF - Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

GEWE - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

GPECM - Global Programme to End Child Marriage

HR - Human Resources

IWW - Imagine Worldwide

KII - Key Informant Interview

LRP - Local Rights Programme

MBSSE - Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education

MEAL - Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning

MOPED - Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

MoPADA-SL - Movement Towards Peace and Development Agency

MPOX - Monkey Pox (disease outbreak)

NaCSA - National Commission for Social Action

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

PDM - Programme Development Meeting

PRRP - Participatory Review and Reflection Process

01 Contributed to Inclusive and Empowering Education



150 teachers improved access to education for special needs kids through knowledge gained in supporting special needs children in collaboration with MBSSE in Bombali District



25,989 parents show improved relationship between children and their parent or caregivers leading to informed decision making based on knowledge gained through their participation in positive parenting sessions



8,000+ children remained and transitioned in school with the support of AASL through the child sponsorship scheme



27,814 Adolescent girls have improved decision making ability by acquiring life skills through participation in safe space sessions in Bombali, Tonkolili, Kambia Koinadugu pujehun



32 Untrained and unqualified teachers in communities acquired teacher's certificate through distance education program and can provide improved quality of teaching service to children



15,667 Men and boys are now agents of change through promotion of positive masculinity, safety of women and girls and end child marriage through participation in male engagement sessions in Bombali, Tonkolili, Kambia and Koinadugu



74 Out-of-school girls reintegrated into mainstream school in Bombali



125 Primary school teachers have improved digital skills through training on tablet learning techniques, supervision and tracking of progress

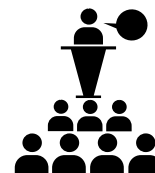
02 Contributed to Inclusive and Participatory Governance for Sustainable Development



90 Youth council members capacitated through training on accountability and monitoring of development interventions, improving their functionality



90 Young people are better positioned for advocacy through training on policy instrument (Local Government Act 2022, GEWE Act, Disability Act, National Youth Policy)



Increased commitment and actions from duty bearers through CSOs, local authorities, community representatives' district and national level convergence from BO, Kono, and Bombali



135 CSO's representatives participated in local council structure in the context of decentralization



180 CSOs' representatives participated in a two-day national convergence dialogue session between CSOs and MoPED/SLANGO on NGO policy and Service Level Agreement to inform an improved operating environment.



2,825 Rightsholders engaged in AASL's participatory review and reflection process providing critical feedback useful which informed its 2023 - 2026 annual plans and budgets

03 Climate Resilience and Sustainable Livelihood



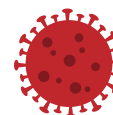
200 youths including members of grassroots organizations in Tonkolili and Kailahun now taking climate aware actions and demanding accountability in their communities based on capacity building on climate governance.



Engaged with the climate unit in the Ministry of Finance to discuss related programs and policies that will shape climate interventions across the country



1,300+ children learning in safer school environments through improved WASH facilities in 10 junior secondary schools in Bo and Western Area



More outbreak-resilient communities fostered by training women and young people on MPOX prevention and resilience measures in Bo, Bombali, Moyamba, Tonkolili, Kono, Western Area and Kambia



360 young people contributed to national and global climate actions through participation in climate justice, green jobs, and climate leadership training delivered through national-level and Global Platform partnerships

Country Context

The year 2025 was shaped by moderate macroeconomic recovery alongside deep-seated structural, social, and climatic vulnerabilities. Sierra Leone's inflation fell to its lowest level since 2014 – reaching approximately 4.35 percent in December, supported by stable food prices and tighter monetary policy. The Bank of Sierra Leone reduced the policy rate to 18.75 percent in late September and eased further in December to stimulate private-sector recovery. The IMF Executive Board completed reviews of Sierra Leone's Extended Credit Facility in mid-December 2025, unlocking US\$79.8 million, acknowledging progress in lowering inflation and projecting growth of around 4.4 percent for 2025. Despite these gains, household vulnerability remained high. According to the World Food Programme's Food Security Monitoring System, 13 percent of households were food insecure and 65 percent moderately food insecure, with 71 percent spending more than three-quarters of their total expenditure on food.

The governance environment remained complex. Government engagement with development partners on the Tripartite Committee's 80 recommendations continued, covering legal drafting and institutional reviews. National discussions on electoral reform, particularly around Recommendation 78 on the preferred electoral system for the 2028 elections, remained polarised. One of the most significant cross-cutting social risks in 2025 was the escalation of the synthetic drug 'Kush' crisis. By year-end, Government announced a special drug court, new sentencing guidance, a dedicated security unit, and a special fund. Community testimonies highlighted severe implications for youth wellbeing, family stability, and gender-based violence risks, particularly in urban informal settlements.

The free quality education programme continued to increase enrolment and narrow the gender gap. However, over 2,000 pupils were excluded from WASSCE entry due to administrative errors, and rural school deficiencies, costly uniforms, and lack of learning materials remained persistent barriers. The health sector continued to face constraints after the MPOX outbreak. There was a declaration of public health emergency in January 2025, which added pressure on already under-resourced systems. ActionAid Sierra Leone responded through risk communication, hygiene kit distribution, and coordination. Livelihoods dominated by agriculture and informal trade suffered from below-average rainfall, inflation, and high input costs. Rising youth unemployment contributed to migration, substance abuse, and crime, with over 1,000 young people reported as actively abusing drugs across the Northern Region.

Security remained generally stable, but incidents along the Sierra Leone–Guinea border persisted. Political activities intensified ahead of the 2028 elections, while persistent gaps in local governance capacity and accountability offset modest gains in participation. Despite these challenges, ActionAid Sierra Leone sustained progress in governance accountability, education access, gender empowerment, climate adaptation, youth advocacy, and health response adapting strategies at every level to safeguard impact and strengthen community resilience.



**Fostering diverse
opportunities
through inclusive
and empowering
education**



Fostering diverse opportunities through inclusive and empowering education

In 2025, ActionAid Sierra Leone (AASL) continued to advance inclusive and empowering education through a combination of infrastructure development, teacher capacity strengthening, child protection programming, youth skills development, community engagement, and innovative learning approaches.

AASL expanded access to safe and inclusive learning environments through infrastructure investments. School construction and rehabilitation activities were undertaken in multiple districts, including Bo, Moyamba, Kambia, Bombali, and the Western Area. Notable achievements included the commencement of a six-classroom school building with office and storage facilities in Nyayagoihun, Moyamba, and the completion and handover of new school facilities in Mbundorbu (Bo District) and Mokelleh (Moyamba District). Additional support included the construction of four 2x2 compartment VIP toilets in Kono and Moyamba, benefiting more than 850 pupils, and the rehabilitation of schools in Bombali and the Western Area.

To improve learning conditions, 200 sets of classroom furniture were supplied to three schools in Bombali, while 8,000+ pupils received learning materials, including books, pens, pencils, school bags etc. across all child sponsorship districts.

A key highlight was the implementation of the Imagine Worldwide (IWW) funded Tablet Learning Programme in Karene District, where over 6,000 pupils across 19 schools benefited from technology-supported literacy and numeracy learning. To strengthen delivery, six staff members received refresher training and subsequently trained 125 teachers (100 male, 25 female) on tablet-based learning methodologies, supervision, and learner progress tracking. Community engagement efforts also reached 255 parents, guardians, and community members (110 male, 145 female), fostering local ownership and support for children's learning. While monitoring reports identified challenges related to school attendance, teacher compliance, tablet utilization, and solar power capacity, the programme demonstrated measurable improvements in pupil engagement, concentration, and learning progression.

Supporting girls' education and child protection remained central to AASL's education strategy. Through UNICEF-funded interventions implemented in Bombali, Kambia,



...Fostering diverse opportunities through inclusive and empowering education

Koinadugu, Tonkolili, and Pujehun, the organisation addressed child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and violence against girls by engaging communities in positive parenting, life skills education, and boys' and men's engagement initiatives. 27,814 adolescent girls participated in safe-space sessions focused on sexual and reproductive health rights, self-esteem, and decision-making. Community dialogues and positive parenting sessions strengthened family and community commitment to protecting and supporting girls' education.



To promote inclusion, 10 community teachers were trained on Inclusive Education, improving support systems for children with disabilities and special learning needs. In addition, 163 girls and mentors from 13 schools participated in training on Violence Against Girls (VAG) prevention and the strengthening of school counselling units. The initiative supported the establishment of VAG clubs in participating schools, enhancing awareness, reporting mechanisms, and support services for affected learners.

Recognising the importance of education beyond the classroom, AASL promoted extracurricular learning through inter-school athletics and Spelling Bee competitions in Moyamba District, helping to build confidence, teamwork, and healthy competition among pupils. The organisation also strengthened school governance by training 60 School Management Committee members, teachers, and community leaders on School Improvement Planning and Accountability Procedures, improving transparency, community oversight, and educational accountability.

Efforts to strengthen educational quality included support for 9 untrained teachers in Bo and Kono to pursue formal teaching qualifications through distance-learning programs. At the same time, climate and environmental education reached 10 schools and communities, with 50 pupils, teachers, and community leaders trained in climate-smart agriculture, reforestation, waste management, and environmental stewardship.

Beyond formal education, AASL invested in youth empowerment and employability. Through the Youth Actions for Good Governance and Self-Reliance (YAGGS) project in Tonkolili, 100 out-of-school youth completed a three-week incubation programme on entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and civic education. A further 30 university graduates received employability training focused on CV writing, job applications, and interview skills, equipping them for successful transitions into employment and vocational opportunities.

Collectively, these achievements demonstrate AASL's commitment to delivering inclusive, participatory, and empowering education. By combining infrastructure improvements, innovative learning technologies, teacher development, child protection, youth skills training, environmental education, and community-led accountability, AASL has strengthened educational opportunities for children and young people across Sierra Leone, ensuring that more learners, especially girls and vulnerable groups, can access quality education and fulfil their potential.



Enhancing inclusive and participatory governance



Enhancing inclusive and participatory governance

In 2025, ActionAid Sierra Leone (AASL) strengthened inclusive and participatory governance by empowering civil society organizations (CSOs), promoting citizen engagement, advancing accountability mechanisms, supporting gender equality, and increasing public participation in local and national decision-making processes. Through child sponsorship and donor-funded initiatives, AASL worked to expand democratic space, strengthen state accountability, and ensure that marginalized groups, particularly women, girls, and young people, have a voice in governance and development.

As part of its commitment to gender-responsive governance, AASL collaborated with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Children's Affairs to commemorate International Women's Day under the theme "Accelerate Empowerment, Rights and Equality for All Women and Girls." The engagement reinforced calls for the elimination of discrimination and bias against women and girls and promoted equal participation in social, economic, and political spheres. AASL continued to advocate for the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of women's and girls' rights as a pathway to inclusive national development.

Promoting transparency and accountability remained a priority. AASL publicly presented its annual plans and budgets at both national and district levels, reaching approximately 500 stakeholders, including government representatives, accountability institutions, communities, partners, and donors. The initiative reinforced downward accountability and participatory development. The process received strong recognition from government institutions, with officials from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), Anti-Corruption Commission, SLANGO, NaCSA, and other stakeholders highlighting AASL's leadership in NGO accountability and transparency. Community leaders also acknowledged the positive impact of AASL's interventions, particularly support provided to women, children, and vulnerable households.

Through the European Union-funded project "Enhancing CSOs Participation in Governance and National Level Policy Processes in Sierra Leone," AASL strengthened the capacity of local civil society actors to influence governance and policy reforms. A total of 70 CSO representatives (39 male, 31 female) in Bombali District received training on local council structures and decentralization processes, improving their understanding of local governance systems and enhancing their ability to engage duty bearers effectively. AASL also launched an international girl-led research initiative and initiated preparations for national dissemination to strengthen advocacy against abuse, discrimination, and harmful practices affecting girls.

Recognising the importance of domestic revenue mobilisation for local development, AASL, in partnership with MoPADA-SL, supported CSOs and local councils in Bo District to map local revenue streams. The exercise identified 20 previously underutilized revenue sources, including water factories, sand mining, stone mining, motorcycle operations, and lorry parks. Findings were presented to councils alongside recommendations to strengthen

...Enhancing inclusive and participatory governance

revenue collection systems, increase financial independence, improve service delivery, and enhance accountability to citizens.

AASL also played a leading role in advancing inclusive climate governance. Through the Irish Aid funded project, a national climate policy convergence in Freetown brought together 70 CSO representatives from Freetown, Kailahun, and Tonkolili alongside government ministries, departments, and agencies to review the Climate Finance Strategy and Carbon Market Framework. Participants gained practical knowledge of climate policy processes and advocated for greater civil society participation and the development of a National Climate Change Law. These efforts were complemented by community-level awareness campaigns in Tonkolili and Kailahun, where CSOs engaged more than 500 community members, including women, youth, and traditional leaders, on climate governance and local adaptation strategies. As a result, communities began translating national climate priorities into local action through by-laws, tree-planting activities, and environmental conservation initiatives.

To promote collective action and policy engagement, AASL continued supporting district-level Climate Change Communities of Practice (CoPs). These platforms strengthened collaboration between CSOs, local councils, and other stakeholders, enabling joint planning, learning, and implementation of climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives. The forums enhanced local ownership of climate governance while documenting lessons and good practices to inform future advocacy and policy engagement.

In the education sector, AASL strengthened accountability and public participation through evidence-based advocacy. Following the dissemination of Community Scorecard findings, CSOs implemented advocacy campaigns targeting local councils, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), and community stakeholders to address challenges related to school monitoring, resource allocation, and transparency. Through community outreach, stakeholder engagements, and radio discussions, the initiative



...Enhancing inclusive and participatory governance

increased public demand for accountability, strengthened collaboration among education actors, and amplified CSO influence in education policy dialogue.

At the national level, AASL facilitated a two-day convergence dialogue between CSOs, MoPED, and SLANGO on the NGO Policy and Service Level Agreement framework. The event brought together over 160 CSO representatives from districts across Sierra Leone to discuss policy challenges affecting civil society operations and develop recommendations for reform. The dialogue culminated in the development of a position paper presented to MoPED, proposing amendments aimed at creating a more enabling environment for civil society engagement and service delivery.

Through Irish Aid-supported programming, AASL further strengthened district-level accountability mechanisms by supporting accountability coordination meetings that brought together government agencies, CSOs, and community stakeholders. These engagements improved collaboration, information sharing, service delivery monitoring, and responsiveness to governance challenges at local level.

Youth participation also featured prominently in governance programming. AASL trained 30 youth leaders on key national policy frameworks, including the Local Government Act (2022), the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, the National Youth Policy, the Disability Act, the Decentralisation Policy, and the Customary Land Rights Act. Participants enhanced their understanding of rights, responsibilities, and governance structures, enabling more effective engagement with duty bearers. Additionally, 30 district Youth Council members received training on accountability and transparency tools, including scorecards and community monitoring mechanisms, and developed action plans for implementation within their communities. These capacity-building efforts were complemented by stakeholder dialogues on electoral reforms, teacher recruitment processes, non-violence, and anti-drug awareness campaigns conducted across Tonkolili, Bo, and Makeni.

Collectively, these interventions demonstrate AASL's commitment to building inclusive and participatory governance systems. By strengthening civil society capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, advancing climate governance, supporting policy reform, enhancing local revenue mobilisation, and empowering women, girls, and youth to participate meaningfully in public affairs, AASL contributed significantly to a more responsive, accountable, and citizen-centred governance landscape in Sierra Leone.



**Promoting climate
resilience and
sustainable
livelihood**



Promoting climate resilience and sustainable livelihood

AASL strengthened climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods by empowering communities, CSOs, local councils, women, and young people to respond to climate challenges while improving economic opportunities and community preparedness. Through climate governance initiatives, livelihood support, environmental stewardship, and emergency response programming, AASL contributed to both climate adaptation and sustainable development across its operational areas.



A major focus of AASL's work was strengthening climate governance and citizen participation in climate policy processes. With support from Irish Aid, 100 young people in Tonkolili and Kailahun received training on climate change governance and climate accountability. These trained youth subsequently cascaded the knowledge to 20 grassroots organizations comprising 100 participants, improving local understanding of climate challenges and enhancing the ability of communities to articulate and advocate on climate-related issues. To sustain policy engagement, AASL supported NGO coordination meetings and District Development Coordination Committee (DDCC) forums to integrate climate issues into local development discussions, while radio programs disseminated climate information to wider audiences. At the national level, AASL engaged the Climate Unit within the Ministry of Finance and initiated collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency to strengthen coordinated climate action and policy implementation.



Recognising the importance of education and community action in building resilience, AASL supported 10 community schools to promote climate-friendly environments, food sovereignty, and local economic empowerment. These interventions increased awareness of environmental challenges while encouraging practical actions that contribute to sustainability and climate adaptation at community level.

AASL also played a significant role in promoting inclusive climate policymaking. Through a national climate policy engagement, 70 representatives from CSOs, local councils, and communities from Tonkolili, Kailahun, and the Western Area participated in discussions on the Climate Finance Strategy and Carbon Market Framework. The process strengthened civil society participation in climate governance and resulted in increased advocacy for greater inclusion of non-state actors in national climate policy development and implementation.

Promoting climate resilience and sustainable livelihood

Sustainable livelihood programming remained a key strategy for building resilience among vulnerable households, particularly women. In Bombali District, AASL supported women's groups engaged in agroecological farming practices through training on good agricultural practices facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. These women received rice and groundnut seedlings, farming equipment including tilling machinery and tarpaulins, as well as cash grants of Le 5,000 to each targeted group to support complementary business activities during the farming season. These investments strengthened household livelihood, promoted climate-resilient agricultural production, and contributed to the Government of Sierra Leone's Feed Salone Agenda.

The year was also marked by AASL's rapid response to the MPOX outbreak in Sierra Leone, which emerged as a national public health emergency in January 2025. Through funding from the Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund (DPRF), AASL implemented a comprehensive community awareness and prevention campaign across six districts, reaching 24,603 people (12,680 women and 11,923 men). In collaboration with District Health Management Teams, 700 community members, including youth, women, and

community health workers, were trained on infection prevention and control, with women constituting 51% of participants. From this group, 175 trained volunteers conducted extensive community and school outreach campaigns, carrying out house-to-house awareness sessions and public sensitization activities on MPOX prevention, symptoms, transmission, and treatment. The programme was further reinforced through radio jingles in local languages, the distribution of handwashing and hygiene materials, and the production of information, education, and communication materials displayed in public spaces. These interventions contributed to heightened public awareness and safer community practices, complementing national efforts that saw MPOX cases decline significantly in many operational areas.

Youth leadership continued to drive local climate action. A regional climate boot camp engaged 60 young people, who later facilitated step-down trainings in Bo and Makeni on climate-smart practices, recycling, green jobs, and advocacy themes such as Fund Our Future, Just Transition, and Ending Inequalities. Additionally, district climate conferences involving 65 youths were organized, while climate resilience activities were implemented with 40 school authorities. These efforts included tree planting campaigns, school safety planning, and the integration of climate preparedness messages into school assemblies and environmental clubs, strengthening environmental awareness among learners and educators.



Promoting climate resilience and sustainable livelihood

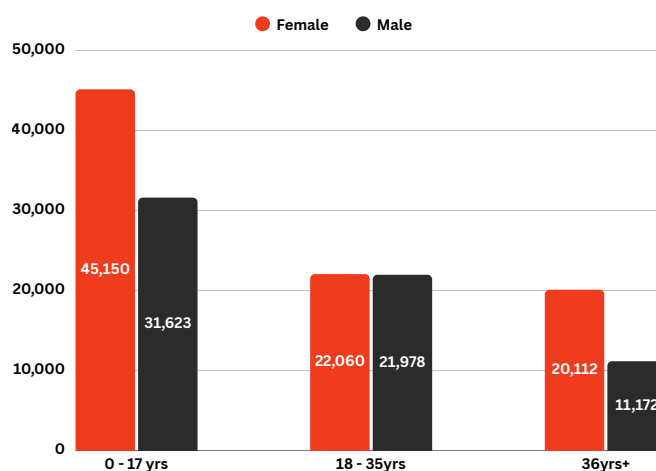
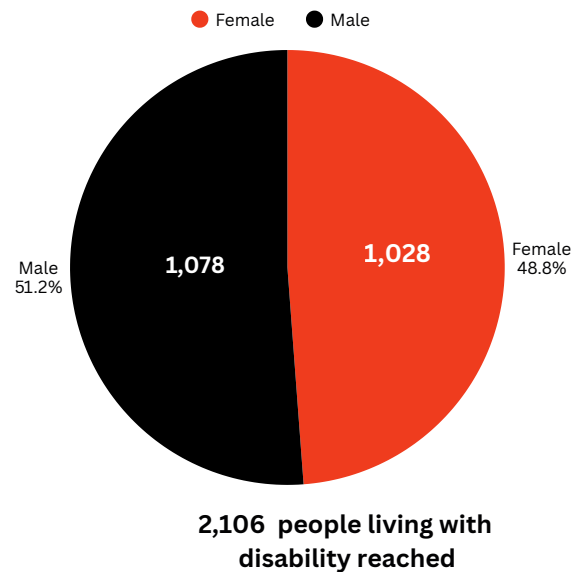
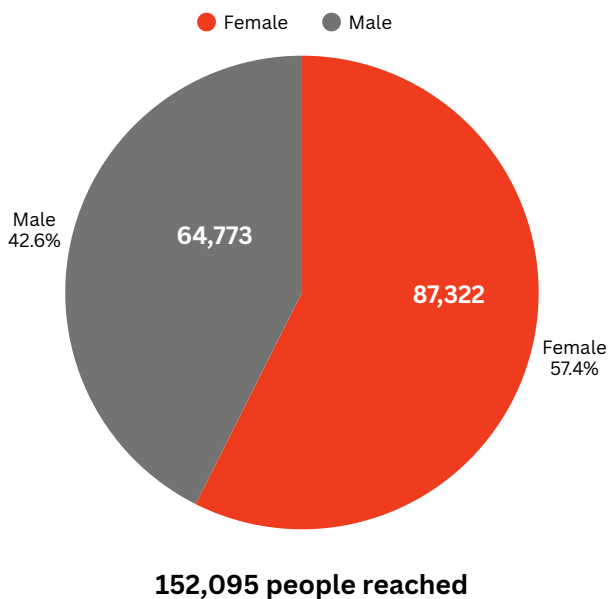
AASL also strengthened women's economic resilience through community-based savings and leadership initiatives. Five Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups comprising 150 women were restructured and supported with improved governance systems, leadership training, and financial management skills. VSLA kits were distributed to facilitate regular savings and lending activities. Early outcomes included stronger group cohesion, improved financial discipline, increased savings, enhanced leadership capacity, and greater participation of women in household and community decision-making processes.

Collectively, these interventions demonstrate AASL's commitment to advancing climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods through a holistic approach that combines climate governance, environmental stewardship, sustainable agriculture, women's economic empowerment, youth-led climate action, and emergency preparedness. By strengthening local capacities, promoting inclusive policy engagement, and supporting practical resilience-building initiatives, AASL has helped communities become better equipped to adapt to climate change, protect their livelihoods, and pursue a more sustainable future.



People Reached

In 2025, ActionAid Sierra Leone significantly expanded its reach across all Local Rights Programmes, engaging a total of 152,095 people directly through education, governance, climate resilience, youth empowerment, and community development interventions. Of this total, 87,322 were female and 64,773 were male, demonstrating a consistent focus on gender-responsive programming. The organisation also reached 2,106 persons with disabilities 1,028 females and 1,078 males reflecting its continued commitment to inclusive development. These accomplishments are firmly aligned with programme activities implemented throughout the year, including safe spaces for adolescent girls, positive parenting education programmes, teacher capacity building, governance dialogues, youth leadership training, and climate-smart livelihood initiatives. The charts below illustrate the disaggregated number of people reached through AASL interventions in 2025.



People reached in 2025 by age and sex



**Resourcing our
work through
strategic anchors**



Programme Effectiveness & MEAL

Throughout 2025, we continued implementing our fourth Country Strategy Paper (2024–2028), Transformative Action for Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Communities, using the operational plan developed in 2024 to guide programme implementation across all Local Rights Programmes (LRPs). The strategy remained our primary reference point for planning, coordination and delivery, ensuring that programmes across the organisation worked towards shared outcomes while remaining responsive to the priorities of the communities we serve.

A key focus during the year was strengthening coordination across programme teams. We convened regular Strategic Programme Meetings every first Monday of the month, where programme staff and management reviewed implementation progress, discussed operational challenges and agreed on practical actions to improve delivery. These meetings created an opportunity for teams working in different districts to learn from one another, share emerging good practices and ensure greater consistency in programme implementation.

As new projects commenced and new staff joined the organisation, we organised programme inception meetings to familiarise teams with project objectives, donor requirements, implementation approaches and reporting expectations. We complemented these with mentoring, coaching and regular programme planning and shared learning sessions, which strengthened technical capacity across programme teams and promoted closer collaboration between programme and support departments.

During the year, we also facilitated the Participatory Review and Reflection Process (PRRP) across all local right programme locations. As always, rather than reviewing our work internally, we brought together rights holders, community leaders, local authorities, partners and staff to jointly reflect on programme performance. These discussions helped us understand what communities considered our strongest contributions, identify areas where implementation could be strengthened and ensure that local priorities continued to shape our programming. The recommendations generated through the PRRP became an important resource for developing our 2026 plans and budget.

Building on the outcomes of the PRRP, we coordinated the organisations-wide planning and budgeting process for 2026. Programme teams and budget holders, including partner representatives of LRPs that we were transitioning to full partnership worked together to develop plans based on programme evidence, community priorities and organizational commitments. The process concluded with cross-LRP planning and consolidation meetings, resulting in a coordinated set of plans that positioned the organisation to commence implementation early in the new programme year.

Throughout the year, the MEAL function remained at the centre of programme quality assurance. We carried out routine monitoring visits across all Local Rights Programmes to assess implementation progress, verify reported results and provide technical support to programme teams. These visits enabled us to identify implementation issues early, discuss solutions with field teams and ensure that agreed actions were followed through. We also undertook joint monitoring missions with UNICEF and UNFPA under the Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GPECM), providing an opportunity to review project

...Programme Effectiveness & MEAL

implementation alongside our partners and strengthen accountability to donor commitments. Where concerns were identified, including in Koinadugu and Tonkolili, management conducted follow-up visits to validate findings, engage directly with staff and partners and support timely corrective actions.

To strengthen the quality of programme evidence, we complemented routine monitoring with Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), beneficiary feedback sessions and endline evaluations. Using multiple sources of evidence allowed us to better understand not only whether activities had been completed, but also how communities were experiencing programme interventions and where adjustments were needed. Evidence generated through these processes informed programme reporting, adaptive management and planning throughout the year.

Community accountability remained a strong feature of our work. We continued to facilitate Community Scorecard exercises that brought together rights holders and duty bearers to assess the quality of public services and identify practical actions for improvement. In Moyamba District, the scorecard process focused on the utilisation of school subsidies and highlighted gaps in fund disbursement, record management and community participation in school governance. We presented these findings to district education stakeholders, leading to commitments to strengthen transparency, improve monitoring and increase community oversight of education resources.

The MEAL team also supported quality assurance across key investments. We verified the completion and functionality of a three-classroom block with office and VIP toilets in Manonkoh (Bombali), the completed classroom complexes in Mbundorbu (Bo) and Mokelleh (Moyamba), and the fabrication and delivery of 200 sets of classroom furniture in Bombali. Follow-up monitoring was conducted on Reading Circle Clubs, girls' re-enrolment initiatives, youth governance activities and peacebuilding interventions to assess progress, document outcomes and strengthen programme reporting.

We convened the usual Programme Development Meeting (PDM), bringing together programme teams and implementing partners to review performance against annual plans, reflect on implementation challenges and agreeing on priorities for the coming year. Together with findings from routine monitoring and the PRRP, this meeting played an important role in shaping the 2026 planning and budgeting process.

Safeguarding remained fully integrated into programme monitoring throughout the year. During field visits, the MEAL team routinely monitored compliance with safeguarding standards, including Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA) protocols and informed consent procedures, ensuring that programme activities continued to provide safe and inclusive spaces for women, children, young people and other rights holders.

By the close of 2025, our Programme and MEAL systems had generated strong evidence that informed programme decisions, strengthened accountability to communities and partners, and guided organizational planning. The close collaboration between programme teams, MEAL staff, partners and communities enabled us to continuously improve programme quality while ensuring that the lessons emerging from implementation were translated into practical actions for 2026.

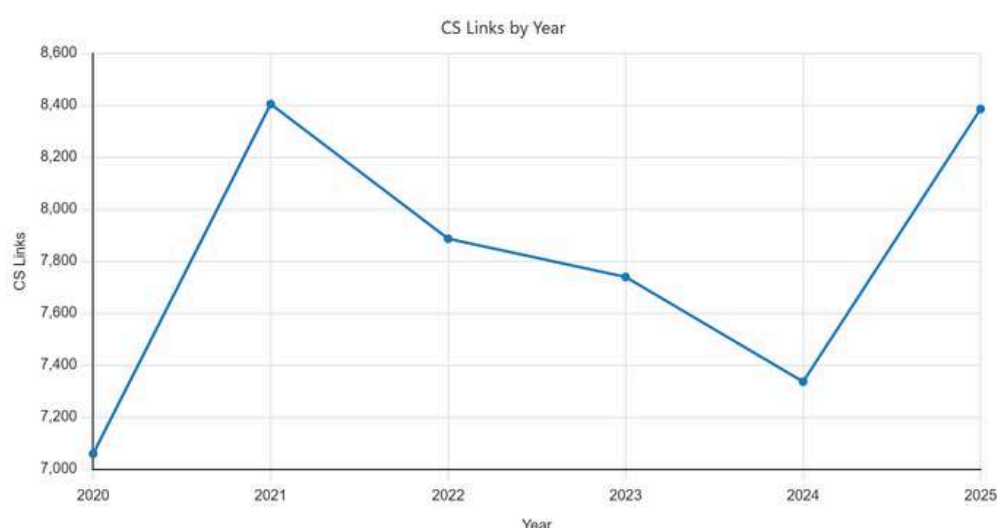
Fundraising

As our two primary funding sources continue to face challenges arising from external factors, we have successfully maintained relatively stable funding levels over recent years, including 2025.

Child Sponsorship

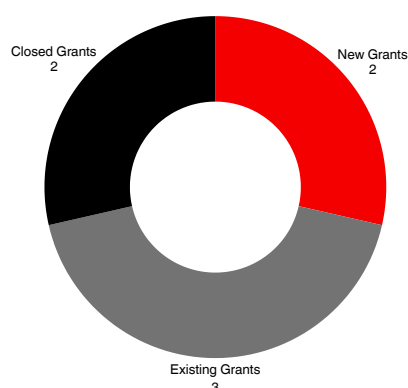
As illustrated in the graph below, the trend in our child sponsorship supporter links showed a steady decline following a peak in 2021. Supporter links increased significantly from 7,060 in 2020 to 8,405 in 2021, representing a 19.1% growth. However, this was followed by a downward trend, decreasing to 7,887 in 2022, 7,740 in 2023, and further to 7,337 in 2024. However, 2025 saw a 14.3% increase in supporter links to 8,386.

This increase in supporter links has resulted in a corresponding increase in child sponsorship income, which continues to have a significant impact on our ability to fully deliver and sustain our CSP commitments and programmatic interventions.



Partnership Income

This alternative funding source complements our regular Child Sponsorship funding and plays a critical role in supporting programme delivery. Fundraising efforts undertaken during the reporting period contributed significantly to mitigating the Child Sponsorship funding gap, helping to sustain key interventions and reducing the impact of funding shortfalls on programme implementation. The illustration below depicts the status of grants in 2025:



Donor Partners include:

European Union
 United Nations Children's Fund
 People's Postcode Lottery through ActionAid UK
 Embassy of Ireland
 United Nations Population Fund
 Imagine Worldwide

Funding Affiliates for child sponsorship include:

Italy, Greece, United Kingdom

Financial Management and Information Technology

Income Performance

The entity's actual income performance is measured in the Great British Pounds (£). The actual total income realised amount to £ 2,218,954.63 by the end of December 2025. This was above the planned income by 0.4%. The reason is that we realised income from Institutional income which was not part of the 2025 plan.

Individual Giving Income realised was £ 1,085,285.48 as compared to £1,074,000 in 2024 representing 1.0% slightly above 2024. The reason for the slight change in 2025 was because of more income realised from both Italy and UK funding affiliates.

A total of £ 1,083,303.4 institutional income was realised by the end of 31st December 2025. This total was contributed by institutions, such as UNICEF, IRISH AID, European Union, UNFPA and other International Donors, from UK

Other income received from individual giving others amounted to £50,365.75 at the end of 31st December 2025.

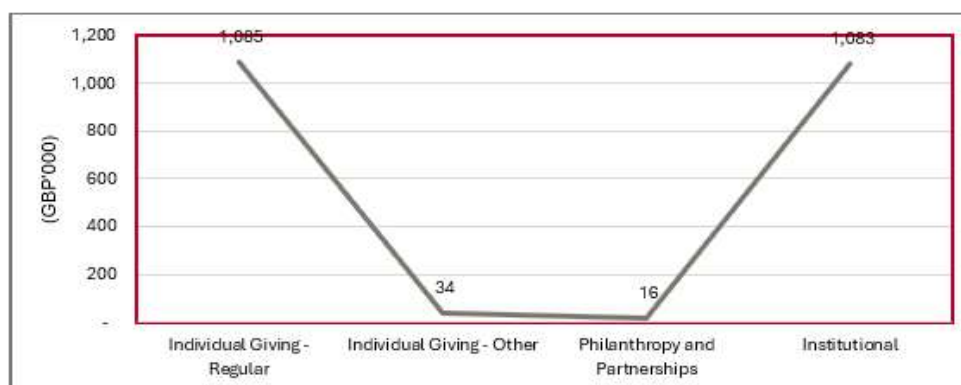
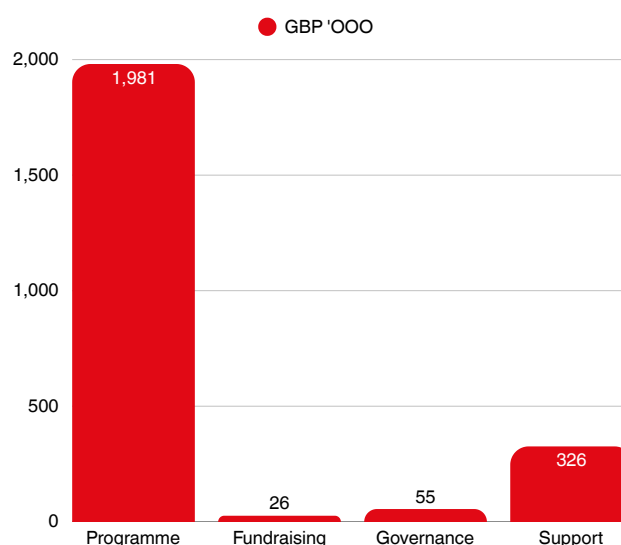


Figure 1: Total Income raised in 2025 (GBP'000)

Expenditure Performance

Total Expenditure recorded for the year ending 31st December 2025 was £ 2,387,982 as compared to £1,814,000 in 2024 representing 32% more than 2024. The increase in spending was due to the increase in total programme and support costs in the reporting year.



Human Resource, Organizational Development and Governance

In 2025, ActionAid Sierra Leone's Human Resources and Board Governance function played a pivotal role in strengthening organisational effectiveness, enhancing governance systems, and supporting the successful delivery of the Country Strategy Paper (CSP). A major institutional milestone was the relocation to the organisation's new headquarters at Berthan Macauley Drive, Juba Hill, which improved coordination, boosted staff morale, and reinforced ActionAid Sierra Leone's corporate identity. Throughout the year, the department maintained a strong focus on workforce management, compliance, governance, staff welfare, and organisational development, while extending support to ActionAid Liberia through the Service Level Agreement and providing technical assistance to ActionAid Zambia in financial management and internal audit.

The department strengthened staff engagement and organisational cohesion through initiatives that promoted collaboration, learning, and inclusivity. The annual staff retreat in Makeni enhanced teamwork and reinforced alignment with organisational priorities, while the ActionAid Women's Forum retreat advanced gender equality by providing mentorship opportunities and leadership development support for female staff. These interventions contributed to a positive work environment and strengthened staff commitment to the organisation's mission and values.

Significant progress was made in strengthening governance and accountability systems. Support was provided for the induction and refresher training of General Assembly and Board members, enabling them to effectively discharge their oversight responsibilities. Key organisational policies, including the Financial Policy and Procedures Manual, Procurement Manual, and Human Resources Manual, were reviewed and updated to align with the CSP and strengthen institutional accountability, transparency, and operational effectiveness.



...Human Resource, Organizational Development and Governance

To ensure uninterrupted programme delivery, the organisation recruited staff across several projects while effectively managing staff exits arising from project closures and career advancement opportunities. Workforce transitions were handled in accordance with established HR policies, ensuring fairness and compliance. Internal staff movements and promotions were also implemented to optimise talent deployment, enhance operational efficiency, and support organisational sustainability.

The department remained responsive to emerging health and safety concerns during the year. In response to the MPOX outbreak, sensitisation sessions were organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and safety guidelines were disseminated to staff to strengthen awareness and preparedness. The rollout of the revised International Safety and Security Policy further enhanced staff readiness and reinforced the organisation's commitment to maintaining a secure working environment.

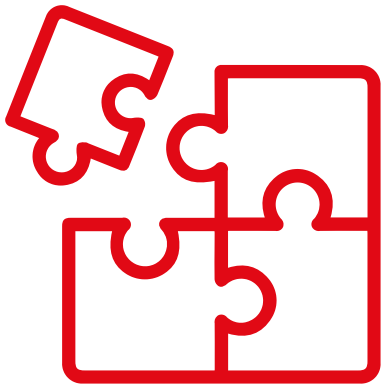
Operational efficiency remained a key achievement area, with core HR functions such as payroll administration, statutory compliance, and staff records management effectively maintained throughout the year. The relocation of the Bo regional office improved working conditions for staff and supported programme operations, while continued support to ActionAid Liberia strengthened regional collaboration and organisational solidarity across the ActionAid Federation.

Staff welfare and organisational culture continued to receive significant attention. Team-building activities and end-of-year support initiatives contributed to staff well-being and strengthened morale. High levels of attendance and punctuality demonstrated strong employee engagement, while the absence of major misconduct cases reflected staff commitment to organisational values, policies, and standards of professional conduct. Beyond internal systems strengthening, the department contributed to enhancing partner capacity and programme quality by facilitating training on Programme Quality Standards, safeguarding, financial management, and audit readiness. These efforts strengthened partners' compliance, accountability, and ability to deliver quality programmes within their respective communities.

Despite these achievements, the department faced challenges related to staff transitions following project closures, limited resources for formal staff training, and increased workloads during periods of organisational change. These experiences underscored the importance of proactive workforce planning, continuous staff engagement, robust governance systems, and sustained investment in staff and partner capacity development. Overall, the Human Resources and Board Governance function made a significant contribution to ActionAid Sierra Leone's organisational growth and effectiveness in 2025, strengthening systems, supporting people, and positioning the organisation to deliver on its strategic priorities while remaining resilient and responsive to change.

Challenges & Learnings

Challenges



- Communities remain highly vulnerable to climate shocks with restricted access to irrigation, modern tools, and climate finance. Community knowledge about climate change remains limited, often associated with deforestation and crop failures rather than systemic causes.
- Delayed Service Level Agreement with line ministries and conflicting process for multi-themed projects
- Migration of sponsored children and poor tracking of relocated families remained a persistent challenge across Bo, Moyamba, and Kono LRPs, contributing to absent cases during message collection and creating gaps in sponsorship data.
- Declining individual giving income from child sponsorship, combined with a shrinking donor landscape limits programme portfolio.

Learnings

- Bringing community perspectives into interface meetings with district stakeholders during PRRPs enabled integrated design of interventions by NGOs, local councils, and MDAs, opening discussions about community development needs and fostering collective accountability.
- Fostering partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency and other government institutions strengthened shared learning on climate change while opening new fundraising opportunities and strengthening evidence-based advocacy for climate finance.



Stories of Change

Esther's Testimony

“My name is Esther Kailey. I was born in a small village placed between forests and the sea where the sun rises early, and the women wake even earlier. My mother was the strongest woman I knew while we were growing up, though she never had the chance to go to school, yet she rose to become town chief of Bomotoke and still serves in that capacity. She taught me how to read emotions before I could read words, how to sew hope into worn-out clothes, and how to walk tall even when the world tries to bend your back.

On this International Women's Day, I stand here not just as myself—but as a voice for her, and for millions like her. When I was twelve, I was told to stop going to school. You're becoming a woman, they said, as if that meant closing a door. I cried that night, not because I didn't understand - but because I did. I understood the limits drawn around my dreams. My mother, although uneducated, was determined to see me educated.

To address this educational challenge and other challenges that came with it, my mother supported my transfer to a bigger town, some twelve miles away, where there is a secondary school, many primary schools and a trade fair that host people from all walks of life, every Friday. I continued my Secondary education and wrote the Basic Entrance Certificate Examination (BECE). At sixteen, I took to trade, with monies I had kept while my mother sent my lunch, while I attended Senior school. I was able to work in a bakery shop and buy bread to sell. I worked in a bakery by day and studied by night. Some days I slept only a few hours, but I kept going.

Now I am 30. I have a Higher Teachers Certificate in education, and have my own bakery, managed by my father. I teach girls who were once said “no” because of my role as school Mentor, the same way I was. Every day, I see their eyes light up with possibility. That is my revolution.

International Women's Day is not just a celebration, it is a reckoning. It's a mirror held up to the world that asks: Are we doing enough?

To every woman listening: Your voice matters. Your pain is real. Your story is power. And to every girl still waiting to be seen, to be heard - hold on. We are building a world where your dreams won't have to hide.

”



Stories of Change

Building Family Bonds Through Positive Parenting

Long before now, every child was taken care of by a community and enjoyed the accolades for good behaviour and correction for wrongdoings. In this present generation, they are exclusively under the watch of their individual parents, making it difficult to look after them everywhere.

Fatmata, a 34-year-old single mother, lives in a semi-urban neighborhood in Makeni. She is a petty trader and is raising her 7-year-old son. Fatmata, grew up in a strict household where discipline was often enforced through yelling and corporal punishment. Determined to raise her child differently, she began exploring the concept of positive parenting.

Ibrahim, her son, a bright and curious child, began displaying signs of defiance in school. He refused to follow instructions, often interrupted teachers, and had frequent emotional outbursts. The school counselor suggested that Fatmata attend a community-based parenting program focusing on positive parenting techniques.

Initially skeptical, Fatmata agreed to attend a workshop and sessions on Positive Parenting. There, she learned the core principles: building a warm relationship, consistent routines, empathetic listening, and using discipline as a teaching tool rather than punishment.

One evening, Ibrahim threw a tantrum because his mother wouldn't allow him to watch more TV. In the past, his mother might have shouted or switched off the TV forcefully. Now, she took a deep breath, knelt to her son's eye level, and calmly said, "I understand you're upset because you want to watch more TV. But it's time for bed. Let's read one of your favorite stories together instead." To her surprise, he paused, then slowly agreed.

Over the next few months, Fatmata started using consistent bedtime routines, involved her son in setting house rules, and praised him specifically when he showed cooperation or kindness. She introduced a "feelings chart" to help him label and express his emotions. When he misbehaved, Fatmata used time-ins instead of time-outs - inviting him to sit with her, talk about what happened, and think of better choices for next time.

Gradually, Ibrahim's behavior at school improved. He became more respectful to his teachers, formed friendships more easily, and even started helping younger students. At home, conflicts reduced significantly. More importantly, their bond deepened—the mother felt heard, supported, and secure.

“ I understand you're upset because you want to watch more TV. But it's time for bed. Let's read one of your favorite stories together instead. ”

Fatmata, PPEP Participants

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