



Your Church Can Get Involved and Partner with the Country of Sierra Leone



Sierra Leone, on the west coast of Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world. It consistently ranks as one of the least developed countries on the United Nations Human Development Index. It also has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world (children dying before reaching age five). Coupled with this overwhelming poverty, from 1991 to 2001 Sierra Leone was embroiled in a devastating civil war in which tens of thousands of people were killed and an estimated one million people were forced from their homes and villages.

This is when COTN came to Sierra Leone. The war destroyed much of the country's infrastructure and has left its lasting scars, most notably on the children—leaving 320,000 children orphaned. Most people in Sierra Leone live in rural farming communities. In a village, a typical family dwelling is a mud-walled home with a dirt floor and a thatched roof. Cooking is done by outdoor fire. Laundry, washing, and bathing are done in the nearest river or with water hauled from the closest water source.





Since most families can barely grow enough food to feed themselves, let alone produce a surplus to sell and generate an income, malnutrition is particularly devastating, especially among the children. Access to healthcare is severely limited. Every day, children and adults die from non-life-threatening diseases or treatable/preventable conditions that have turned fatal. Education also faces two major hurdles in most Sierra Leone communities: it is not readily accessible, and it is not fully valued, especially for girls.

In Sierra Leone, we have one Children's Home and two Village Partnership Programs. We have over 100 children in our Children's Home program, over 30 students in our University/Vocational Program, and over 550 children in our Village Partnership Programs. Alongside caring partners like you, COTN has helped establish a daily presence in several communities, providing schools, medical clinics, feeding centers, health initiatives, Christian discipleship, opportunities for young adults to attend university, clean water, sustainable development, and more.

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

As you continue to develop your relationship with Sierra Leone, you can stay involved throughout the year by partnering with us on country-specific projects:

[Click here to see all available projects in Sierra Leone.](#)

VENTURE

As you become more invested in Sierra Leone, your church may decide to take a Venture trip and see firsthand how you can partner with this community. For more information, check out our Sierra Leone Venture [calendar for this year!](#)

In addition, we keep a standby list of emergency response medical and construction teams. Please contact [our Venture department](#) for more information.

SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship is still an important need in Sierra Leone, as we seek to provide holistic care for the children. As we continue to help families become more stable and independent, we also provide school fees, food, and medical care to over 700 children. Your church can host a Sponsorship Sunday events, or individuals can sponsor at any time.

Children's Home: Sponsor a child living in our full-care Children's Home.





Village Partnership Program: Sponsor a child living with their parents or caregivers.

University/Vocational Program: Sponsor a student's higher education and partner with them to transform their community.

[Click here to see all the children who need sponsors in Sierra Leone.](#)

DONATE RESOURCES

Wherever possible, COTN believes in purchasing needed supplies from local businesses in each country. However, we still have a need to ship supplies and equipment to supplement nutrition, clothing, and other materials for our children. Specifically, in Sierra Leone, we are in need of

- **COTN Item of the Month**
Each month your church will be able to collect needed items for [Sierra Leone](#).
- **Feeding Children Initiative**
You can help provide [food from local sources](#) to our children in Sierra Leone, supporting the community around Sierra Leone.
- **SmilePacks®**
[SmilePacks](#) help us provide for the physical, spiritual, and educational needs of our children in Sierra Leone. We collect Bible, School, Hygiene, and Let's Eat SmilePacks.
- **Pack a Container**
Together with other local churches you can pack an entire shipping container of supplies for the children in Sierra Leone.

For more information, contact Fraser Ratzlaff at fraserratzlaff@cotni.org or 206-745-7932.

