

# Unleashing the Potential of Youth – Donor Impact Report

## Big Give Christmas Challenge 2024

Thanks to your generosity during the Big Give Christmas Challenge 2024, we not only met our £10,000 target, you unlocked so much more: brighter futures for young people in Uganda and Sierra Leone.

Your gift has been helping vulnerable youth gain skills, find their voice, and lead change in their communities. We're delighted to share the difference you've made.

### Why Your Support Matters

Young people in both countries face enormous barriers:

- Uganda: 37.8% of rural youth are not in education, employment or training (rising to 47.5% for young women).
- Sierra Leone: Youth unemployment reaches 70%.


Without opportunities, many are trapped in poverty from the start of their adult lives. Together, we are changing that.

## Sierra Leone: Strengthening Civil Society & Youth Leadership

### Background

This project in the Kenema and Pujehun districts addresses the exclusion of youth, women, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) from decision-making. We focused on **building the capacity of 30 local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)** (including grassroots CBOs) while directly empowering marginalized groups to participate.

Your support has enabled hundreds of young people in Sierra Leone to gain the skills, confidence, and opportunities they need to build better futures.



At just 15, Djakati is raising her one-year-old daughter, Maima. She never went to school and didn't know her rights. Her days were spent caring for Maima, leaving little room for a different future.

That changed when she joined our project. She now attends literacy classes, learning to write her name, count, and speak English. These small steps have given her the confidence to make her own choices.

She's also learning tailoring, a skill that excites her. But the most powerful change is that everything she learns, she's passing on to Maima.

By knowing her rights and setting an example, she's creating a new future for her daughter—one where knowledge, choice, and opportunity are possible.

### Progress on Outcomes and Activities

**Skills and income:** 400 youth – 70% of them young women and 10% living with disabilities – were trained in practical trades such as tailoring, soap-making, and bakery. Many are now selling dresses, school uniforms, soap, and bread in their local markets. On average, their incomes have risen by 42%, giving them greater independence and the ability to support their families.

**Digital literacy:** 130 youth were trained in mobile phone repairs and digital services. Already 90 are earning money by fixing handsets, offering typing services, or running small printing businesses. These opportunities connect them to modern job markets and sustainable livelihoods.

**Community services:** Through community organisations, 3,480 families received loans, seeds, literacy classes, and farming inputs. In total, over 20,500 people benefited — most of them young people and women. As a result, household incomes rose by 70%, making families more resilient and able to send their children to school.

**Leadership:** Young people are stepping into decision-making spaces, with over 60% of governance roles in local organisations now held by youth. This means the next generation is actively shaping the policies and projects that affect their communities.

**"Before the training, I had no way of supporting myself. Now I make and sell bread in my community. I feel proud to contribute to my family and to be independent." – Young woman, Kenema district**

## Uganda: Breaking the Cycle of Child Labour

### Background

Our project in the Busoga region of Eastern Uganda directly addresses the prevalence of child labour in sugar and rice production.

This region has one of the highest percentages of child labour in the country, with over 40% of families reporting at least one child working in the fields or factories. These children spend an average of 43 hours per week working in hazardous conditions, suffering verbal/physical abuse and handling dangerous tools. This situation traps families in a cycle of poverty as children are forced to sacrifice their education for work.

### Progress on Outcomes and Activities

**Direct Intervention:** Over 160 "community champions" were trained and have already helped over 1,000 children return to school and their families. Families have been linked to savings/loan groups and given training in small business development to allow them to keep their children in school. 300 older youth have been supported to undertake apprenticeships in vocational skills such as shoe making, tailoring and metal work.

Overall, since joining the apprenticeship, youngest people reported positive changes. Making new friends (82%) and feeling more confident (76%) were the most common improvements, while 34% reported already earning an income from the new skills (although the training is still ongoing)

**Safety & Enforcement:** We have raised awareness in the community of the dangers of child labour through radio shows and face to face discussions. We have provided training to social workers and labour inspectors who are working to ensure children stay out of hazardous work. For example, one of our trainees intercepted 13 boys on their way to dangerous sugarcane cutting; since then the boys have been counselled and reunited with their families and supported to return to education.

**Working in partnership with local government**, trained local government officials have drafted three new child labour by-laws and action plans to strengthen protection for children, demonstrating how grassroots action can shape policy. At the same time, businesses are adopting new codes of conduct to combat child labour

**"I reported two boys working at the sugar factory... With support from the chairman and police, they were removed and are now back in school." – Community Champion, Bugiri Town**



### **Lasting Impact & Looking Ahead**

Together, we have already seen powerful change — from young women in Sierra Leone running their own businesses to children in Uganda being freed from labour and returning to school. Your generosity has opened doors of opportunity, and the impact will continue to ripple out into families and communities.

We would be delighted to share more about these projects and explore ways you can continue making a difference. If you would like to talk further or learn more about how your support is changing lives, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you once again for being part of this journey. With your continued support, we can keep unleashing the potential of youth.

Your contribution truly makes a difference, and we couldn't have done it without you.