



Friends of Sierra Leone

December 2025 Newsletter

2025 Projects Report

by Jim Hanson

Our projects committee has seen a more normal flow of applications after a break-out year in 2024, with one exception. Private, earmarked donations have pushed the total amount going to the **Mamaka Agricultural Project** to over \$118,000 for 2025. They are currently working with 216 farmers and adding new projects along the way, including inland fisheries and bee-keeping.



With the help of a grant from the Northern California RPCV group last year, the Mamaka Project bought 75 hives. At present 30 hives are colonized with a first harvest in April of this year. (The picture above shows one of the women farmers presenting the US Ambassador with a quart of honey from the first harvest.) Based on the initial harvest volumes, and

anticipating two harvests per year, a farmer can make \$80/hive/yr.

The Mamaka Project placed the hives in our demonstration cashew plantation. The bees pollinate the trees. The plantation is now 3 years old, and the picture with the two boys shows a sample of the first harvest. Cashew trees reach full yield capacity in 5-7 years and will continue to produce for about 25 years.

Two health clinics in the Freetown area received grants this year. The **Comforti Women's and Children's Clinic**, in Calaba



Town, received \$2000 to purchase steel doors and windows for their new clinic. SUDU Salone, an NGO that works to find homes for orphaned and displaced children, took on the rehabilitation of the **Murray Town Health Clinic**. A \$4000 FoSL grant enabled them to purchase new maternity and hospital bed for the facility. Another well-known NGO in Sierra Leone, **Uman Talk**, was granted \$4000 to provide sanitary supplies and sex and health education at three junior secondary

schools in Waterloo.

The **Lokomasama Secondary School** in Port Loko was able to upgrade their biology, chemistry, and physics labs with a \$3750 grant from FoSL. This will greatly enhance their STEM education program, and better prepare students for their final exams. In Bo, the **Craftshare Technical Institute** received \$1900 to rehabilitate the school's latrines, which serve 200 to 300 students per year.

A small community in Kambia District, **Bapuya Village**, was overjoyed to hear that they would receive \$3750 to complete their community centre. This project was begun in 2023 with community contributions. They came to FoSL, as no one else was willing to help this small community complete their center. They are working hard to complete it before the rainy season arrives.



With the start of the new school year in August, FoSL once again donated \$250 from the Daphne Sawyer Dunn Scholarship fund to The **Paul School for the Blind** in Bo. This fund aids needy sight-impaired students with everything from uniforms to transportation.

The Friends of Sierra Leone has joined in a new partnership this year, begun by RPCVs Brenda and Bruce Blair. The **Passion for Learning Initiative** will work to increase childhood literacy in Mondema, a village in the Kenema District. They are working to remodel a donated building for after-school programs, and hope to hire a literacy teacher to work with all the primary schools in the area. You can support their work by donation to PLI on our webpage.

We are not quite done with 2025 yet. Our committee will be reviewing six new applications this month for possible funding. The projects committee would like to thank all of you for your loyal support. You make all this work possible! Happy Holidays.



Presidents' Address

By Aiah Fanday & Anthony McMillon



Both of us would like to thank the entire FoSL Membership and to our dedicated and committed Board Members, who volunteer their time and resources selflessly without compensation. Thanks to all our donors over the years, Volunteers, and to all of you, for your ongoing support as dedicated members.

We will continue the increased presence on social media platforms, promote an increase in participation of our virtual lectures/talks by a variety of journalists, authors, experts and other presenters relating to issues pertinent to Sierra Leone, organize annual meetings, increase funding for projects throughout Sierra Leone and strengthen advocacy through lobbying for issues in the US and Sierra Leone. None of these objectives will be accomplished without your continued support, and we thank you in advance for your support.

Thanks to all the Virtual Monthly Presenters to the FoSL Members and Friends of Sierra Leone; in addition, thanks to our Advocacy Committee Members, headed by Marco Cavallaro for organizing the virtual presentations.

We wish to thank Nat Kofi, our new Fundraising Committee chair who has presented some innovative means to more effectively promote FoSL through its fundraising efforts and to provide more reliable funding.

As a Non-Profit Organization, we pride ourselves on ensuring that 100% of all donations go directly to projects and ongoing support, to designated

institutions in Sierra Leone. We are indebted to all our Donors in support of our Small Grant Funds. In 2025 in funded \$18,550 projects in various Districts in Sierra Leone. Many thanks to the Fund Raising Committee Members for their in venting and approval of grant applications.

We are planning our 2026 Annual Meeting in Sierra Leone. Tentative dates are April 30 through May 1 & 2. Please express your intent by signing the running list on our website and egroup forum.

Both of us are committed to serving you as servant-leaders of this great organization, but most importantly, we are counting on your continued support to execute and achieve our stated common goals. Again, may we express our gratitude to each of you for your dedication to FoSL and your support as we have yet to accomplish our common goals for the both FoSL and Sierra Leone in general.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support of FoSL and its mission.

We wish you Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Happy Holidays!!

Dumangbe Bridge Update

As detailed in the FOSL December 2024 Newsletter, the **Engineers without Borders DC** (EWBDC) chapter is working on a bridge project to connect the two parts of Dumangbe Village separated by a stream in SE Salone. Thanks in part to all FOSL members who donated to last years end of year fund raiser, EWBDC has been able to complete the bridge design and put the project out for bid for an early 2026 construction start. However, we're still a little bit short of our construction cost goal, so additional donations for this years end of year fund raiser. Please go to the EWB-DC website for more project information and to donate.

Thanks. T. Skep Nordmark, Salone PC
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Advocacy

by Marco Cavallaro

Stateside Updates

As we close out 2025 and look toward a hopeful new year, we want to highlight recent developments within the Peace Corps community and share exciting updates from our Salone advocacy network.

Peace Corps Congressional Gold Medal Update

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is leading an inspiring nationwide campaign to secure a **Congressional Gold Medal honoring all Peace Corps Volunteers**, the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow. To date, **16 bipartisan co-sponsors** have signed onto the legislation, an encouraging sign of growing support.

How FoSL members can get involved

Here are three easy ways to make an impact:

1. Email or call your U.S. Senators and Representative—share why Peace Corps service matters and ask them to co-sponsor the bill.
2. Amplify NPCA's campaign on social media to expand awareness.
3. Encourage fellow RPCVs to take action, momentum is key.

Let's help ensure all Peace Corps volunteers (past, current and future) receive the recognition they deserve.

Salone Advocacy Zooms

September 7, 2025: Talk with Sia Evelyn Nyandemo

We were honored to welcome Sia Evelyn Nyandemo, Founder of the **Sickle**

Cell Carers Awareness Network, for a powerful conversation focused on sickle cell anemia in Sierra Leone.



Sia Nyandemo shared her deeply personal journey, highlighting the urgent need for:

- early detection and newborn screening,
- increased access to education, and
- broader capacity in Sierra Leone's healthcare system to support affected families.

Her compassion, courage, and relentless advocacy left a strong impression on all in attendance. We look forward to continued partnership with her organization and opportunities for future collaboration.

November 2, 2025: Ambassador Amara Sowa & Deputy Ambassador Sheku Mesali

In November, we were thrilled to host His Excellency Ambassador Amara Sowa alongside Deputy Ambassador Sheku Mesali for a dynamic diplomatic discussion about:



- Sierra Leone & U.S. ties,
- partnership opportunities in education and public health, and
- channels for diaspora engagement.

Their openness, warmth, and vision for the future sparked rich dialogue and thoughtful questions from attendees. We're pleased to announce that **another Zoom session with Ambassador Sowa is being planned for early 2026**, and details will be shared as soon as scheduling is finalized.

Looking Ahead

Our momentum continues because of members like you. Whether advocating for the Congressional Gold Medal legislation, learning from health leaders like Madam Nyandemoh, or engaging with Sierra Leone's diplomatic representatives, **our community remains united by purpose, connection, and service.**

Thank you for staying engaged. Thank you for showing up. And thank you for helping drive meaningful advocacy for Sierra Leone and the global Peace Corps community.

Wishing you peace, joy, and connection this holiday season, and we hope to see you at an upcoming event!

Contact Us: advocacy@fosalone.org

Sierra Leone's Tiwai Island added to UNESCO's World Heritage list



Activist Tommy Garnett's decades of work has paid off after Sierra Leone's Tiwai Island – a lush forest home to one of the world's highest concentrations of primates – landed a spot on UNESCO's World Heritage list

<https://www.trtafrika.com/english/article/2729f8afcc6f>

Fundraising Corner

Nat Kofi, Fundraising Chair

As Friends of Sierra Leone prepares for our **Annual Meeting in Sierra Leone**, we are entering one of the most exciting and mission-driven seasons in recent years. Several board members and FoSL partners will travel to Sierra Leone to conduct **monitoring and evaluation visits** at one or two project sites. These visits will strengthen accountability, deepen relationships with our community partners, and help us make informed decisions about future investments.

To ensure this important work is fully supported, the Fundraising Committee is launching several new initiatives aimed at expanding our donor base, re-energizing member participation, and building long-term sustainability for FoSL.

“Back to Sierra Leone” Campaign – Support Our Delegation

FoSL is introducing a dedicated fundraising effort to support travel, in-country logistics, and project monitoring activities for the upcoming delegation visit during our Annual Meeting. Members will have an opportunity to:

Sponsor a Delegate (full or partial trip support)

Contribute to a new **Monitoring & Evaluation Micro-Fund**

Support in-country events such as a community engagement forum or project visit reception

Upcoming Fundraising Initiative

1. Legacy & Planned Giving Program

We invite members to consider leaving a lasting impact through estate planning or long-term commitments. Tools such as FreeWill.com make it simple to include FoSL in your will or trust. This aligns with our new “Leave a Legacy” awareness campaign.

2. Online Fundraising & Virtual Events

To broaden our reach, FoSL will begin hosting **virtual benefit concerts, story-sharing evenings**, and cultural showcases featuring Sierra

Leonean artists and RPCV voices. These online events will include live donation links and highlight the real impact of your contributions.

3. Board Outreach to Inactive Members

Each board member will personally reach out to at least **five inactive members or past donors** to help rebuild connections across our community. This personalized approach has been shown to increase engagement and foster a sense of belonging.

4. Communicating Donation Impact

Members frequently ask, *"What does my donation actually accomplish?"*

In response, we are developing a clear framework that illustrates how specific amounts translate into real-world outcomes.

Examples include:

\$50 → school supplies for 10 students

\$500 → classroom refurbishment

This new "Impact Scale" will appear on our website, in newsletters, and during campaigns.

5. Clarifying FoSL's Unique Value

We are strengthening our messaging around what sets FoSL apart:

Trusted grassroots partnerships

Transparent project oversight

Support for small, community-driven initiatives

A diaspora- and RPCV-led commitment to Sierra Leone's long-term success

6. Donor Tier Segmentation & Giving Circles

To enhance our reach, we are building a tiered donor engagement system, including recognition levels and potential giving circles to encourage deeper participation from supporters capable of making larger commitments.

How You Can Help Today

As we prepare for our annual meeting in Sierra Leone, we encourage all members to:

Participate in upcoming fundraising events

Join the **"Back to Sierra Leone"** support campaign

Consider FoSL in your planned giving

Help reconnect with former members by sharing our initiatives

Reach out with ideas, questions, or offers to volunteer

Your involvement—large or small—directly strengthens FoSL's ability to deliver community-focused impact across Sierra Leone.

We Want to Hear From You

As your new Fundraising Chair, I welcome your feedback, ideas, and interest in participating in any of the initiatives mentioned above.

If you would like to get involved, sponsor part of the upcoming delegation, or help strengthen our community outreach, **please reach out to me (Nat Kofi) directly. 202-316-0553**

Together, we can make Friend of Sierra Leone a more successful as we continue the legacy of service and solidarity that defines us.

Check the date on your mailing label or subject line. Is it time to renew? If there is no date, or if the date is some time in the past, it's time to renew! Fill out and mail the form below with your check.

Or renew through our website:

<https://fosalone.org/mbrship/>

FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE MEMBERSHIP FORM	
Name (include maiden) _____	FoSL needs your participation. Circle your areas of interest: Advocacy Education Membership Newsletter/Communications Projects Events Would you be willing to be part of a network to receive information and contact your members of Congress at important times? (Please include your email address.) Yes
Address _____	
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	
Home Phone _____ Email _____	
Day Phone _____ Occupation _____	
Relationship to SL (e.g., Sierra Leonean, PC, etc.) _____	
Sierra Leone Home _____ Years _____ to _____	
Membership: \$25 per Individual \$ _____	
Donation to Projects: \$ _____	
FoSL Circle \$1000 and up Supporter \$500 to \$999 Sponsor \$100 to \$499 Friend \$50 - \$99	
Overseas Mail (add \$10) \$ _____	FoSL P.O. Box 667553 Houston, TX 77266-7553
Total Remitted \$ _____	
Membership dues support operations for Friends of Sierra Leone, including meetings, newsletters, and the website. All other donations support FoSL projects in Sierra Leone. Dues and other contributions to Friends of Sierra Leone are fully tax-deductible. Thank you for your support! Please return this form with your check made payable to Friends of Sierra Leone to the address at the right. →	

Friends of Sierra Leone
P.O. Box 667553
Houston, TX 77266-7553

Web: fosalone.org



Address Service Requested

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		Aiah Fanday (Upper Marlboro, Maryland)
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Projects		Jim Hanson (Social Circle, Georgia)
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