

20 YEARS OF Igniting Hope

EduNations

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

20 YEARS OF Igniting Hope

Dear praying friends,

Be glad!

"And that's about it, friends. Be glad in God! I don't mind repeating what I have written in earlier letters, and I hope you don't mind hearing it again. Better safe than sorry – so here goes" Philippians 3:1 (MSG)

As EduNations celebrates 20 years of impacting thousands of lives in rural Sierra Leone, everyone who has been a part of this great cause has a reason to be glad. Everyone who has said a prayer, wished us all the best, left us a message, attended our events, gave us a donation, advocated for this cause, taken a trip with us, served as an intern, a volunteer, a staff member or a board member—everyone, be glad!

Be glad, because for 20 years, we have reached out together to some of the hardest-to-reach areas of the world.

> **"We have built and furnished 15 schools, employed 150 staff, educated thousands of children who would not have had an education, and we have completely transformed lives."**

To spend even a small amount of time doing this is a great contribution to the socio-economic development of Sierra Leone, but to do all of this for 20 years is phenomenal. To do all this for one child is impactful, but to do all this for thousands of children has a generational impact. To do all this by ourselves would have been heroic, but to do this together with you all has been a joy. So be glad!



Friends, I wish I could tell you that our mission has been accomplished. Far from it, we still have students to educate, teachers to support, schools to operate, families to impact, and communities to transform. This is the work we have been called to. It is such a privilege to be called to do this together with each of you and for this, I am glad. So, as we look back with gladness for the remarkable things God has done in us and through us over these last 20 years, may I humbly ask you to look forward with us and imagine just how many more students, staff, families, and communities we are being called to serve—just how many more will be able to read and write and come to know the love of Jesus Christ, which surpasses human understanding, all because we obey this call.

So, for the sake of Him who has called us and of those to whom He has called us, and because of the hope that we ignite, we are glad in God.

Sincerely yours,



Samuel Sesay
President, EduNations Inc.

EduNations' mission is to ignite hope in under-resourced communities by comprehensively educating rising generations and to honor Christ in all we do.

Because you gave...

3,693
students
were educated

48% Girls 1,758

52% Boys 1,935



347,742
MEALS DISTRIBUTED

3,109
uniforms
were provided



118
TEACHERS
employed

68
teacher
sponsorships

637
student
sponsorships

24
AUXILIARY STAFF
WERE EMPLOYED

385
Senior Secondary
Students Boarded

117
Students
Graduated

20 Years of **Hope and Transformation**



EduNations was founded by 5 families who had adopted children from Sierra Leone

September
- EduNations builds and opens Mapainda Primary School and Mayatta Primary School

2004



September
- EduNations builds and opens Mapainda Junior Secondary School

2011



September
- EduNations builds and opens Mabum Primary School
- EduNations builds and opens Rokassa Nursery School and Rokassa Primary School

2013

2005



September
- EduNations builds and opens Makonko Primary and Junior Secondary School*

December
- EduNations is established as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in the United States

*Makonko school was eventually taken over by former partners in Sierra Leone.

2012



May
- Samuel Sesay is hired as EduNations' In-Country Director

September
- EduNations is established as an official Non-Government Organization in Sierra Leone

2014



September
- EduNations begins operating Fintonia Primary School
- Ebola epidemic causes national closure of schools in Sierra Leone. EduNations engages in Ebola relief efforts to help slow the spread of the disease

Our Approach

We are committed to educating the whole child in mind, body, soul and spirit through four core pillars of development.

Intellectual Development · Physical Development · Psychological and Social Development· Spiritual Development



April
- Schools reopen in Sierra Leone
- EduNations begins operating Fintonia Junior Secondary School

2015

2016



September
- EduNations builds and opens Gbenekoro Junior Secondary School



June
- Samuel Sesay becomes EduNations' President

September
- EduNations builds and opens Mabum Nursery School, Fintonia Nursery School, Rokassa Junior Secondary School and Mayatta Nursery School

2017

2018



September
- EduNations builds and opens Mapainda Nursery School



March
- COVID-19 causes national closure of schools in Sierra Leone. EduNations offers social distanced tutoring to students and distributes food to the communities where we serve.

September
- Schools reopen in Sierra Leone

2020

2021

2023

APRIL

EduNations graduates first class of high school students!



March
- EduNations builds and opens Rokassa Senior Secondary Boarding School





Beyond What We Imagined

by Ken Houseknecht, Founding Member

When we visited Sierra Leone earlier this year — and as we celebrated our 20th anniversary in 2024 — I was often asked if EduNations had become what we envisioned at the beginning.

"No," I said, "it's far better than we hoped or imagined."

Twenty years ago, five families who had adopted children from Sierra Leone, looked for a way to give back to that proud nation, which was recovering from a long, brutal, and devastating war. A team traveled to Sierra Leone, meeting with a range of people and organizations, all of whom were already providing an array of services. After much prayer and discussion, the decision was made to focus on education, leading to the birth of EduNations.

The thought was simple, but profound: educate one child and you transform their future. Educate enough children and you can change a village. Educate enough villages and you can reshape a nation. Hence the name, EduNations.

In the early years, we partnered with established organizations. The results were mixed, but even the setbacks — and there were many — offered opportunities to learn, to better define a "successful school," and to build a strong, sustainable foundation for the future.

A pivotal moment arrived in 2012, when EduNations hired Samuel Sesay, who has served as our first president. Under his leadership — now supported by an outstanding team, in Sierra Leone and the United States — EduNations has developed and steadily grown into an organization that today operates 15 schools (from pre-K through high school), in six villages, educating nearly 4,000 students each year, and employing 150 teachers and staff.

We are essentially running a school district, but with the additional challenges of doing so in an under-resourced and still developing nation.

Even still, the students at our schools consistently rank at the top in their national exams — and more than 200 have graduated in the last two years, many of whom are continuing their education at universities, studying to be doctors, teachers, and business and political leaders. They will help to shape the future for Sierra Leone.

In addition to rigorous mental, physical, and social development, we also emphasize spiritual values and growth — educating the whole person.

For all of our successes, the future presents many challenges. Many of our students still attend school hungry. Medical care is often inadequate. Runaway inflation sends costs soaring. And 40 percent of the children in Sierra Leone still lack access to education.

There is an African proverb which asks, "When is the best time to plant a tree? Twenty years ago. When is the second best time? Today!"

We are humbled and grateful for all that's been done to improve the lives of tens of thousands of children over the last 20 years. Much good has been done. Many miracles have happened. More than we dared hope for or imagine. Inspired and informed by these experiences, we look to the future with optimism and determination.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported EduNations in any way over the last 20 years. Buckle up, we're just getting started!



Ken Houseknecht and his wife, Tina, take part in graduation festivities on a recent trip to Sierra Leone.



Ken poses for a photo with children during one of his first trips to Sierra Leone in 2007.



Abass Daniel Fullah, Valedictorian of EduNations Graduating Class of 2024

This is just the beginning...

"Congratulations to my classmates as graduates! As we move towards achieving our dreams, we believe that this graduation is not the end, but the beginning of greatness because the world is full of opportunities waiting for us. Whether we are entering the university or pursuing other dreams, we know that we have the tools and the spirit to succeed by staying focused and being determined to always believe in ourselves.

After the publishing of my high school results from the West African Senior School Certificate Examination Council, I want to pursue my studies as a medical doctor. **Thanks to EduNations donors and supporters for igniting hope!"**

Excerpt from
Valedictorian Graduation Speech





The Transformative **Power of Sponsorship**

Thanks to her sponsors, 15-year-old Adama S. Kamara is in her final year at EduNations Hope Academy Senior Secondary School and will graduate in 2025.

At EduNations, we've seen how the power of sponsorship can change lives. In the early years of our existence, we offered sponsorships to 150 students who otherwise were unable to afford schooling. As we grew and established our own schools, we officially launched our student sponsorship program in 2013, which has since expanded significantly. Since 2013, the sponsorship program has grown to over 700 sponsorships. In 2023, we began offering sponsorship to teachers as well, supplementing their salaries and improving the quality of education for students.

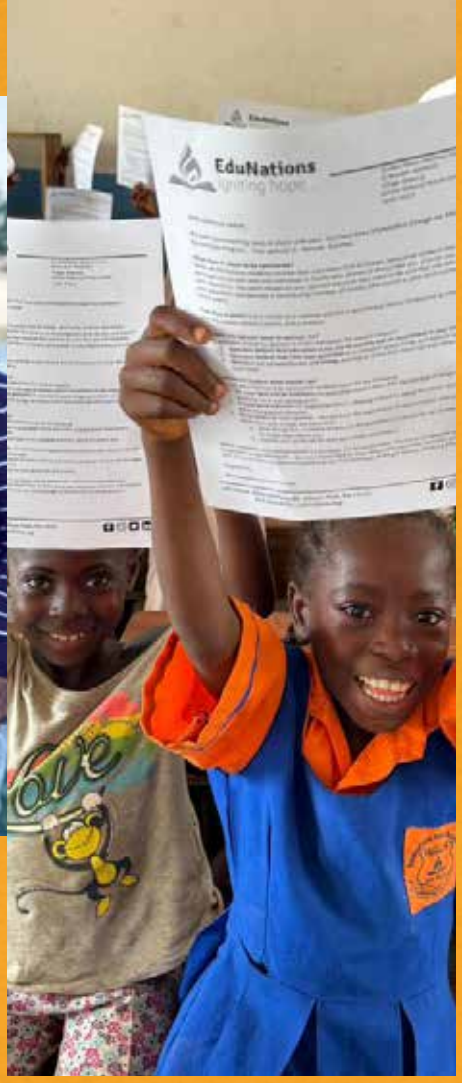
Sponsorship plays a vital role in providing students and teachers in Sierra Leone with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive. For students, it covers educational costs, including tuition, uniforms, and school supplies, which are often out of reach for many families in rural areas. For teachers, sponsorship offers much-needed financial stability, ensuring that they can focus on delivering quality education to their students.

Sponsorship impacts more than just the educational journey of a student. One of the most impactful stories is that of Adama S. Kamara. At 15, Adama was on the verge of an arranged early marriage, a common practice in her community. Without access to education, her future would have been confined to traditional roles and limited opportunities. However, when a supporter in the US chose to sponsor Adama, her father called off the wedding, giving Adama the chance to continue her studies.

Now, Adama is in her final year at EduNations Hope Academy Senior Secondary School and will graduate in 2025. She dreams of becoming a lawyer and is determined to achieve her goals. "My relationship with my parents is going well, which I am thankful to God for, and EduNations gave me the voice to speak out against the arranged marriage," she says. "Now, my family supports me in focusing on my education and achieving my dreams."

Sponsorship is about much more than financial aid. It's about igniting hope and providing opportunities for students like Adama to break free from societal expectations and achieve their dreams. Because of you, our faithful community of givers, over 700 students and teachers are now sponsored, and we believe this is only the beginning. Together, we can continue to transform lives in Sierra Leone—one student and teacher at a time—and build a brighter future for generations to come.





Two Decades of **Transformative Support**

For 20 years, Gary P. Hall has been a key supporter of EduNations, helping bring education to some of the most underserved children in Sierra Leone. Through his leadership at WTS, an environmental consulting business he co-founded in 1982, Hall has provided vital resources and guidance to help EduNations grow from its early beginnings to a thriving organization.

Gary first became involved with EduNations in 2003, after learning from his friend, Rick Kennedy, that Rick and his wife were adopting a little girl from Sierra Leone. Hall, whose father had been an orphan, immediately offered to help facilitate the adoption process. He kept his word by providing financial assistance to a family adopting siblings from Sierra Leone. This act of kindness marked the start of his deep involvement with EduNations.

Hall's passion for education and generosity has been essential to the organization's success. He provided the resources needed to build several schools in Sierra Leone, and his commitment inspired one of his employees to fund the medical clinic building in Rokassa. Hall has also supported EduNations during critical moments, such as during the Ebola crisis, when he helped fund vaccine distribution.

Hall believes deeply in the power of giving, saying, "The more you give, the more you get." His ongoing contributions have had a lasting impact, and he encourages others to support EduNations, noting, "Our dollars go so much further in Sierra Leone, creating a bigger impact."

> **"Our dollars go so much further in Sierra Leone, creating a bigger impact."**
>
> Donor Gary P. Hall



Salimatu's Dedication to Protecting Children

Meet Salimatu Mary Kamara. Salimatu is a teacher at EduNations Hope Senior Secondary School, and for the past year, she has also served as a Child Protection Agent.

You might be thinking, "What is a Child Protection Agent?" In an effort to promote and protect children's rights, EduNations has established Child Protection Agents in the communities where we serve. Child Protection Agents are tasked with identifying, investigating, and reporting any cases of child abuse and gender-based violence. They also serve as an advocate for the children, educating the community and the students on children's rights and the laws that uphold them. They work within the schools to address issues such as bullying, provide counseling services, and overall support the emotional wellbeing of the students.

Salimatu has this to say about her time working as a Child Protection Agent:

"I serve as a Child Protection Agent because I want to restore the confidence in the voices of our girls that are affected with abuse and violence, and I want to educate the community people about the rights of children and the danger of child abuse. The best part of being a child protection agent is seeing the girls raise their voices to fight against Female Genital Mutilation and other abuses, and seeing the dignity of our girls restored. My dream is to see a community where the rights of children are not just words on paper but a lived reality. I believe that every child deserves a childhood free from violence—to grow in a safe environment and live life in all its fullness surrounded by protective caring families."

Our **Programs**

Quality Classroom Instruction Program

Our Quality Classroom Instruction program is designed to give students an excellent classroom experience by providing well-qualified and trained teachers, textbooks, school supplies, national examination support, unique out-of-classroom learning experiences, and bicycles for transportation to and from school.

Boarding Program

Our boarding program is specifically designed for our senior secondary students, who come to Rokassa from EduNations schools in all six communities to live in dormitories on campus while receiving their high school education. These students receive housing, nutritious meals, and daily care.

Psychological and Social Support Program

Our Psychological and Social Support program encourages students and family to have a healthy view of self and others. We offer guidance and counseling and advocate for human rights, equality, equity, and empowerment.

Healthcare Program

Our Healthcare program supports the health and wellness of every child by providing access to affordable healthcare.

WASH

Our WASH program promotes the health and wellness of our students by providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Village Development

Our Village Development program supports community development and humanitarian aid that impacts the general population and addresses specific needs.



Salimatu Mary Kamara serves as one of EduNations' Child Protection Agents, who advocate for children and educate the community on children's rights.



From Awareness to Action: Social Work Team Promotes Girls' Rights

EduNations is committed to educating the whole child in mind, body, soul, and spirit, which often means addressing the needs of our students beyond the classroom. Our Psychological and Social Support Program, aimed at caring for the emotional and mental needs of students, is one of the key ways that we do this. EduNations two Social Workers, Mariama Jabbie and Kadiatu Conteh, lead this effort by meeting regularly with students, families, and communities to address key issues such as children's and girls' rights, drug abuse, and sexual assault, among others.

This past year, EduNations Social Workers have collaborated with a team of volunteers from Memorial Park Church, spearheaded by Judy Schiffbauer, to address the urgent issues surrounding girls' and children's rights. Though Sierra Leone has laws in place to protect girls and children, many remote communities in Sierra Leone are uninformed and engage in harmful traditional practices, such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Through education and collaboration with community leaders, EduNations is working towards changing dangerous cultural norms and mindsets in order to empower girls and children towards a brighter future.

Schiffbauer and team have spent the last several months doing extensive research and meeting regularly to discuss how to best address issues on teen pregnancy, FGM, child abuse, and early marriage. The team purchased a curriculum and training from One Circle Foundation which offers a structured support group for girls ages 9-18 by integrating relational theory, resiliency practices, and skills training. The purpose of these support groups are to increase positive connection, strength, and competence in girls. The peer groups will address specific issues, like teen pregnancy and early marriage, that many of our girls face. EduNations also plans to begin a similar program with our male students to promote boys' and young men's safe and healthy passage through pre-teen and adolescent years.

Judy reflects on her time working with the team:

> **"It is a privilege and honor to walk alongside Kadiatu and Mariama. Their love and concern for their students is evident, and Joyce Ruzanic, Pramila Rajendran and I are inspired by their dedication. One Circle Foundation was so impressed with EduNations, that they generously donated three scholarships to attend their intensive facilitators' training. We are excited to start these new programs which we hope will help the students navigate daunting challenges. We see God's hand in guiding our efforts."**

Additionally, Jabbie and Conteh have been working with the communities to end FGM and child abuse by offering community engagement meetings. At these meetings, social workers present the harmful effects of these dangerous practices, advocate for the rights of girls and children, and collaborate with leaders and families towards a better path forward. Through all of these efforts, FGM has been ended in Rokassa, in part through the work of student Hannah Koroma, who was brave enough to publicly speak out against FGM.

Hannah says, "I want to use this opportunity to say thank you to our donors for their support and also thank you to our Aunties that teach us about FGM, so that we can teach others in our various communities about the negative impacts of FGM, and encourage girls to say NO and put a STOP to FGM."

While there is still much work to be done, we thank you for your support as we educate and empower students!



Our Team

Did you know?

EduNations is a registered charity in both the US and in Sierra Leone!

EduNations believes that sustainable change and development starts with empowering local leadership. That's why our team in the US exists to support the work of our Sierra Leone team, who oversees all programs. Though our offices are thousands of miles apart, we are one team, dedicated to working together towards one mission: to ignite hope in Sierra Leone.

"I love being a part of God's Kingdom work through EduNations. These students are not only receiving hope for a better future on earth, but also the opportunity of an eternity in Heaven. My favorite part of the job is hearing the impact these students are having on their families and villages for His glory!" - Pilar Rodriguez

Program Services Team, Sierra Leone

Listed in order from left to right
• Mariama Jabbie - Social Worker • Solomon Sankoh - Development Officer
• Michael Alusine Turay - Education Secretary • Ibrahim Fofonah - Driver
• Samuel Sesay - President • Isatu Dumbuya - Administration and Human Resources Officer
• Salma Rubio - Volunteer Sponsorship Coordinator • Kadiatu Conteh - Social Worker
• Isaac Boima - Program Manager • Michael Jude Conteh - Finance Officer

<-Supporting Services Team (US)

Listed in order from left to right
Dana Kaltenberger - US Director
Sarah Pietryga - Development Coordinator
Pilar Rodriguez - Sponsorship Coordinator

EduNations addresses the reality of my past as a child that grew up during the 11 years civil war, when there was no opportunity to go to school for children in remote communities. I was born with the passion to provide education to children in remote communities in Sierra Leone. Working for EduNations gives me a sense of fulfillment and a hope that children living in remote communities in Sierra Leone will become beacons of light through education."

- Isaac Boima







EduNations Celebrates 20 Years of Impact in Sierra Leone

On June 27, 2024, we celebrated our 20th anniversary with a special fundraiser at Babeville in Buffalo, NY, bringing together 170 donors, supporters, and sponsors. The event reflected on two decades of transformative work in Sierra Leone, made possible by the generosity of our community.

EduNations' president, Samuel Sesay, delivered a keynote address, highlighting how the organization has grown from a small vision into a movement changing lives through education. He emphasized that the unwavering support of donors has been instrumental in building schools and educating thousands of children in remote areas. Samuel also shared his dreams for EduNations' continued growth over the next 20 years.

Our Buffalo-based founders and board members, Ken Krieger, Rick Kennedy, and Ken Houseknecht, expressed deep gratitude to supporters, recounting the challenges overcome with their help. They emphasized that education has not only changed individual lives but also uplifted entire communities.

A moving testimony came from board member Alimamy Bader, a child adopted from Sierra Leone after the Blood Diamond War. His story of triumph through education reminded everyone of the impact we can achieve together.

Thanks to the generosity of attendees and sponsors, over $50,000 was raised to support the expansion of EduNations' schools and programs! The anniversary celebration was not just a reflection of what has been achieved, but a launchpad for furthering our mission to ensure that more children in Sierra Leone have access to education and the opportunities it provides.

We are deeply grateful for your support over the last 20 years, and we are excited for what the next 20 years will bring as, together, we continue this transformative work and make a lasting impact for generations to come.



EduNations' founding families attend the 20th anniversary event in Buffalo, NY, on June 27, 2024.



Moved with Compassion

Dear Friends of EduNations,

It has been a privilege for me to serve as Chairman of the EduNations' board for the past year. Since my first trip to Sierra Leone in 2013, I have seen impact beyond measure into the lives of students, families, and the communities we serve. Our students are doing exceptionally well and our schools are receiving national attention, including from the minister of education. Emily and I had the opportunity to attend our 2nd senior secondary school graduation in June. It was such a blessing for us to see the joy reflected in the faces of the proud parents and teachers, as well as hope and determination in the voices of the students to use their education to better themselves and their communities. Most importantly, hearing the testimonies of the students, it is clear that we are graduating young men and women to be salt and light in the world.

We are so thankful for your support during the past year. You, like Jesus in Matthew 9:36, when seeing individuals and crowds that were helpless, have been "moved with compassion". We are thankful that child and teacher sponsorships have grown to one third of our monthly need, that the number of churches that support the ministry has expanded, and that we are beginning to see fruit from our labor in submitting grants. Yet, there are remaining opportunities and needs that we would like to meet as God provides. I invite you to pray for His continued work through EduNations and to explore with us how you can participate more deeply in this life changing ministry.

With gratitude,



Jeff Gingrich
Board Chairman

GET INVOLVED

As a nonprofit, EduNations depends on the generous donations of individuals, foundations, groups, and corporations. These contributions support the education of 3,700+ students and the transformation of thousands of lives!

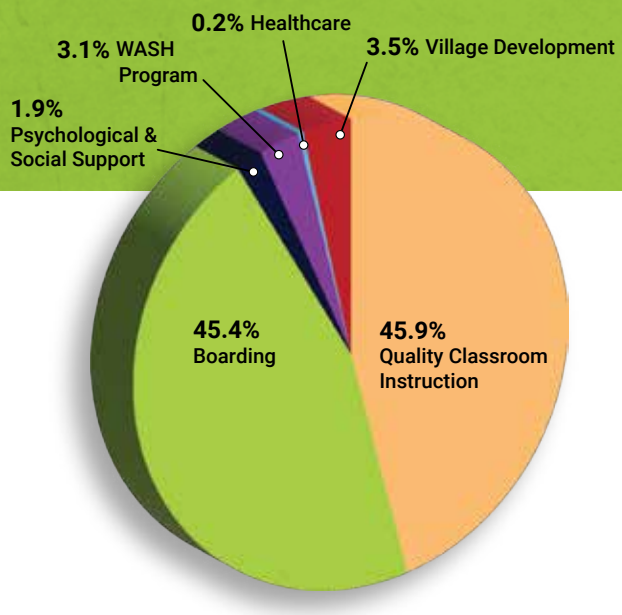
DONATE Join the mission and ignite hope today! Our website is set up to receive both one-time and recurring donations. You can also mail a check to our U.S. address listed on the back cover.
EduNations.org/donate

SPONSOR A STUDENT OR TEACHER Directly make a difference in a student or teacher's life through sponsorship! When you sponsor a student, your contribution offsets costs such as tuition, school supplies, uniforms, and more. When you sponsor a teacher, your gift covers the cost of their monthly, competitive salary. Use the QR code or visit **EduNations.org/sponsorships**.

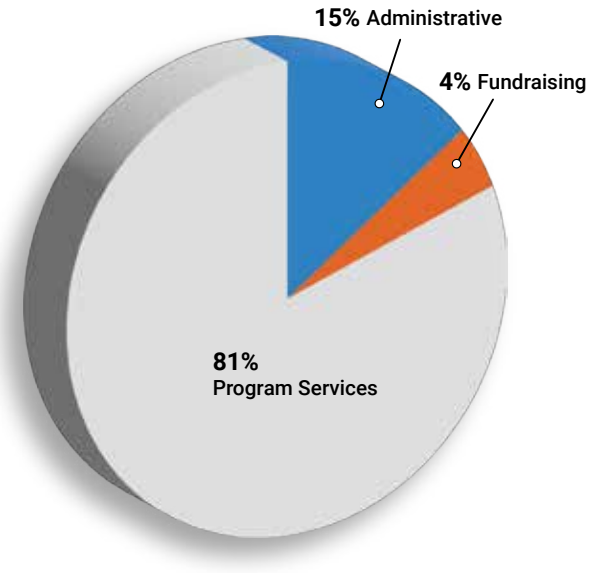
CONNECT WITH US
We regularly post relevant updates across our social media pages. Please help us grow by following, liking, sharing, and inviting others to join our pages on social media!
@edunationsinc

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MAILING LIST Get exclusive updates from the field and follow along as we continue educating students, igniting hope, and transforming lives in Sierra Leone!
EduNations.org/mailing-list.

Financials



Expenses - Program Services



Total Expenses

Revenue and Support

Contributions	$1,050,830
Event Revenue	$89,230
In-Kind Contributions	$86,375
Investment Income	$227
TOTAL	**$1,226,662**

Expenses

PROGRAM SERVICES	
Quality Classroom Instruction	$467,283
Boarding	$461,699
Psychological & Social Support	$19,784
WASH Program	$31,354
Healthcare Program	$2,522
Village Development	$35,371
SUPPORTING SERVICES	
Administrative	$182,962
Fundraising	$58,736
TOTAL	**$1,259,711**

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Gingrich
Chairman of the Board

Rick Kennedy
Vice Chairman of the Board

Stacy Tessaro
Secretary

Alimamy Bader
Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Scott Graham

Ken Houseknecht

Ken Krieger

Bruce Tenenbaum

Beth Weaver

EduNations
igniting hope...

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