

# IMPACT WEEKLY

## Happy 64<sup>th</sup> Independence, Salone

On Sunday, 27th April, Sierra Leone marked 64 years of independence—a moment to reflect on our progress as a nation, our shared challenges, and most importantly, our enduring spirit of resilience and hope.

At Marie Stopes Sierra Leone, we've been proud partners in that journey for 39 of those 64 years. Since opening our doors in 1986, we've been committed to one clear mission: to ensure that every woman and girl in Sierra Leone has the freedom to choose her reproductive future.

Over nearly four decades, we've worked side by side with government and communities to expand access to family planning, improve maternal health, and ensure that reproductive rights are respected—not just in words, but in practice. We've witnessed meaningful progress: from national commitments to end child marriage, to growing recognition of the importance of women's health in the country's development agenda.

As His Excellency the President rightly said in his Independence Day speech:

"The spirit of independence is not just about our freedom; it is about taking responsibility in lifting our country and ensuring that no one is left behind." We share that vision. Because when women and girls are empowered to make decisions about their bodies and their futures, whole communities thrive. We're encouraged by the government's continued investment in maternal and child health, including the significant decline in maternal mortality from 1,165 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013 to 354 today—a powerful sign of what collaboration can achieve.

As we celebrate this milestone, we remain deeply grateful for the impact we've made together in Salone, and even more hopeful for the road ahead. "Salone na fo wi all, na wi own."

Below is our impact for 2024. These figures are a representation of all the lives we have changed.

### 2024 Impact

**201,974**Unsafe abortions  
averted**332,722**Unintended  
Pregnancies averted**685,276**People used a family  
planning method we  
provided**752**Maternal deaths  
averted

## Outreach Sleepovers in Bombali & Moyamba

Last week, our Bombali and Moyamba outreach teams pushed beyond the usual limits—spending nights in remote communities to ensure no one missed out on care. These overnight stays, or sleepovers, allowed our teams to reach clients who are only available in the evenings due to farm work or cultural norms.



The Bombali team visited four hard-to-reach villages—Katumpen, Kagbere, Kamawonie, and Kamabiao—from April 14th to 17th. By staying overnight, they created safe, private spaces for community members to access services, often late into the night. Over just two days, the team reached a remarkable 2,180 clients.

Meanwhile, the Moyamba team carried out a sleepover on April 16th in Lungi village, where they attended to 56 clients—ensuring even this quiet, rural community had access to family planning and essential health care.

These efforts reflect our deep commitment to reaching the unreached—meeting people where they are, with care, dignity, and no barriers.

## Equipping PSS Service Providers

In a continued effort to strengthen reproductive health services, MSSL—with support from the Y4H project—organized a hands-on training from April 14th to 18th for PSS service providers across 15 supported sites.

The focus? Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC)—a vital option for women seeking effective and long-term protection. Each site sent two representatives, totaling 30 service providers, who deepened their knowledge and practical skills in administering LARC within government health facilities.

This training ensures that our frontline providers are not only confident but also competent in offering quality contraceptive services. It's one more step toward empowering clients with informed choices and expanding access to modern contraception across Sierra Leone.

### Health Tip

**Change your sanitary pad regularly.** Marie pad is a great choice for your period but you should change them every 4–6 hours to avoid infections and maintain freshness.

## Upcoming Events

- Menstrual Hygiene Month – May 2025
- Menstrual Hygiene day – 28th May 2025
- National Health Summit – 15th – 17th May 2025

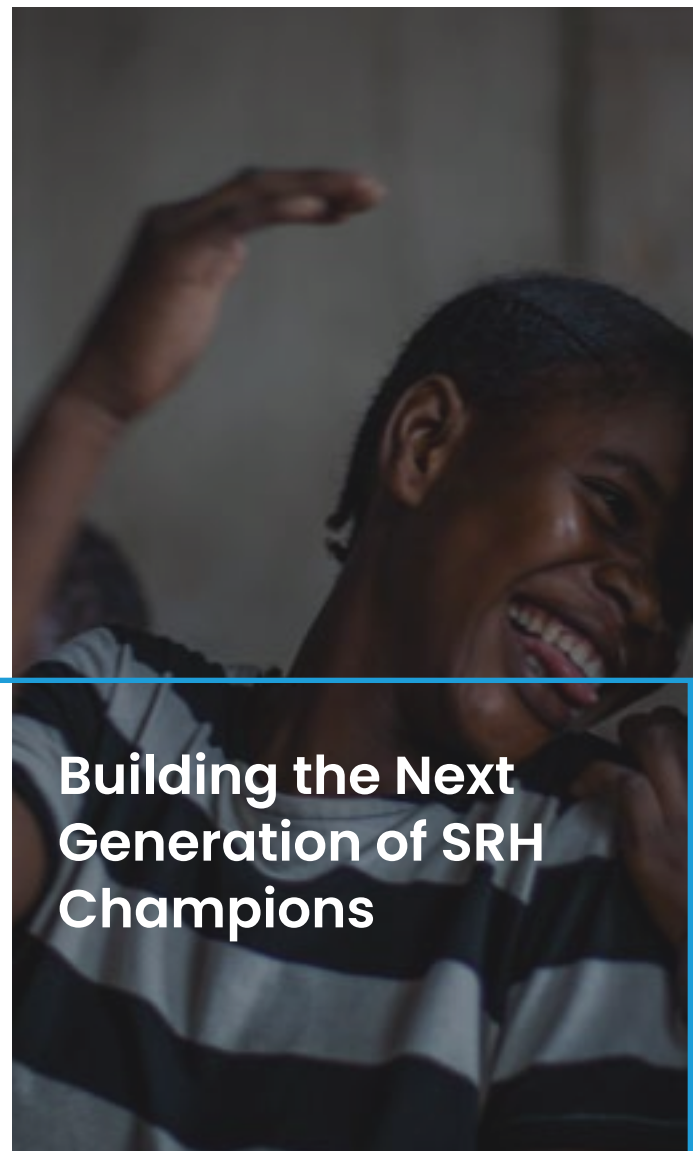
# Joint Monitoring: Learning Together, Planning Better

We teamed up with the Ministry of Health—including FP Coordinators, pharmacists, program managers, and RH/FP focal points—for joint mentoring visits in the same districts. These collaborative visits served as a powerful opportunity to evaluate service delivery, identify gaps, and ensure SRH services are reaching the adolescents who need them most.

The joint approach helped strengthen relationships with local stakeholders, enabling shared learning and real-time feedback. Importantly, these conversations brought community voices—especially young women—into the room, deepening our understanding of access barriers and allowing for more targeted, inclusive solutions.

As one participant shared: “It’s not just about delivering services. It’s about listening, learning, and making sure our young people feel seen and supported.”

Together, we’re working to make family planning more accessible, more equitable, and more youth-friendly—one champion, one clinic, and one community at a time.



## Building the Next Generation of SRH Champions

Then, on April 22nd, we took the next step in shaping the future of youth leadership by training and engaging 150 school health club members, mentors, and school heads. The focus was on sustainability and project closure—but more importantly, on equipping these young champions with the tools they need to continue the work long after the project ends. Through hands-on training in family planning, post-abortion care, and SRH services, participants developed critical thinking and peer education skills that will empower them to challenge provider bias, educate their peers, and lead SRH conversations in their schools and communities.

Together, these engagements represent more than isolated events—they’re part of a broader movement to build an informed, confident, and empowered generation that can take charge of their reproductive health and future.







## Empowering Youth, One Conversation at a Time

Over the past two weeks, Marie Stopes Sierra Leone (MSSL), in collaboration with the Youth for Health (Y4H) project, has deepened its commitment to adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) through two dynamic engagements aimed at amplifying youth voices and building lasting impact.

From April 15th to 16th, MSSL hosted a powerful community dialogue that brought together nearly 40 participants—including local chiefs, religious leaders, youth advocates, and adolescents—from Kambia, Port Loko, and the Western Area. The focus: breaking down the barriers young people face when accessing SRH services. The session tackled tough but necessary conversations around social norms, religious beliefs, and gender dynamics, creating space for understanding and change.

A highlight of the event was the introduction of community champions—local advocates selected to serve as MSSL brand ambassadors within their communities. These champions will play a key role in raising awareness and fostering grassroots support for adolescent SRH, making sure young people not only have a voice, but also a choice.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE – Know Your Family Planning Method



### Across

3. A small plastic device inserted into the uterus to prevent pregnancy (3)
4. A male barrier method worn during intercourse (6)
6. Monthly hormonal method taken by women (5)
7. A surgical method for permanent male contraception (9)
8. Choosing not to have sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy (10)

### Down

1. MSSL Brand pills taken after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy (6)
2. The condition that family planning methods aim to prevent or plan for (9)
3. A tiny rod placed under the skin that releases hormones (8)
5. Injection given every 3 months to prevent pregnancy (11)

## Senior Management Team Retreat



The Senior Management Team (SMT) of Marie Stopes Sierra Leone gathered at Mozza Resort for a four-day leadership retreat themed “Leading Together, Winning Together.”

The retreat provided a chance to reflect on our progress, align our strategies, and strengthen collaboration across all directorates. From a team-building boat cruise to in-depth planning sessions, each day was

marked by honest conversations, shared goals, and renewed energy for the work ahead.

Cultural celebrations, historic reflections, and a touch of humor (thanks to our themed dress days) reminded us that leadership isn’t just about strategy—it’s about unity. We left the retreat not just with plans, but with purpose. Ready to serve, stronger together.

## Team Member’s Corner

**New Staff:** Isha Youngah – Centre Operations Manager  
Samuel Dumbuya - Centre Clinical Lead

**Vacancy:** RM & E Officer

**Celebrations:** Massah Maccela Sheriff (Centre Nurse) – Delivered a bouncing baby boy  
Abdul Sesay (Driver) – Newly wedded

## Y4H Steering Committee Wraps Up

On Tuesday, 30th April, Marie Stopes Sierra Leone, in partnership with HASiL, held the final Y4H Steering Committee meeting to reflect on the journey of the EU-funded Youth for Health (Y4H) project, which officially comes to a close this June after three impactful years.

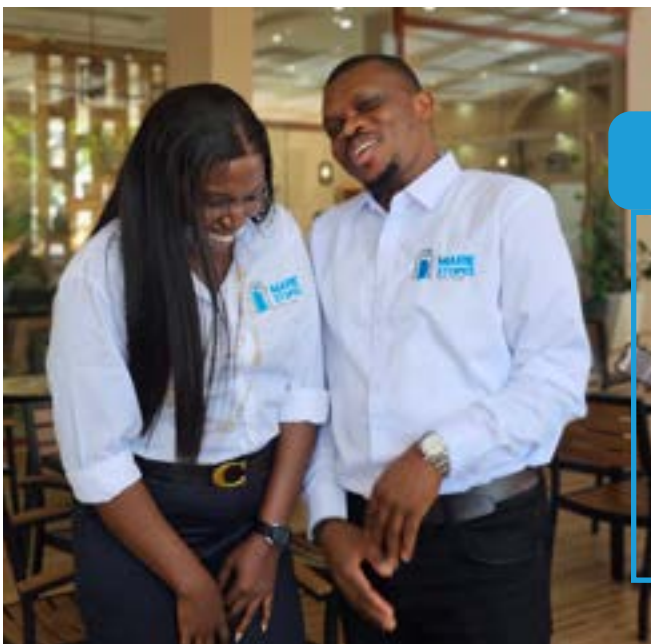
The meeting brought together a diverse group of key stakeholders, including EU delegate Elisa Tesselli, representatives from the Ministries of Health, Gender, and Youth, the Teenage Pregnancy Secretariat, and members of MSSL's leadership and project teams. Together, they reviewed the project's achievements, exchanged lessons from recent learning sessions—like the Addis workshop—and looked ahead to future opportunities.

While the end of the project is near, the spirit of collaboration is stronger than ever. The session highlighted the power of partnership, with MSSL and HASiL reaffirming their commitment to a united, consortium-driven approach grounded in aligned activities, mutual support, and full compliance with EU standards.



Importantly, a key outcome from the meeting was the decision to retain the Steering Committee, recognizing its value in guiding and sustaining efforts that remain central to our work—especially in adolescent health and rights.

As we close one chapter, we're energized for what's next—and proud of the legacy the Y4H project leaves behind: strengthened systems, empowered youth, and partners ready to go even further.



### Photo of the Week

When the Commercial and Marketing Director and the Deputy Director for Clinical Quality start looking less like senior execs and more like high school teens during lunch break! LOL

Sometimes the best strategy is laughter—and clearly, they've mastered it.

Signed

*Mohamed Kabba*

Editor-in-Chief