



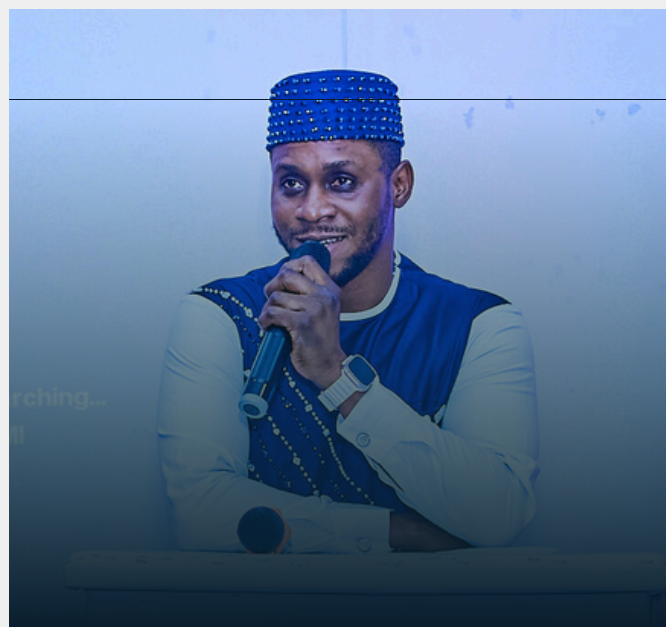
MSSL Hosts Continuous Medical Education (CME)

On July 11, 2025, Marie Stopes Sierra Leone (MSSL) hosted a remarkable Continuous Medical Education (CME) session at the New Brookfields Hotel in Freetown, drawing over 20 medical doctors committed to advancing women's health in Sierra Leone. The session focused on a crucial topic: "Mifepristone's Role in Contemporary Obstetrics and Gynaecological Practice."

Led by keynote speaker **Professor A.O. Adeniji**, a respected voice in the field, this CME served not only as a platform for knowledge-sharing but also as a powerful reminder of the importance of collaboration in healthcare delivery.

At MSSL, our goal goes beyond providing high-quality care in our own clinics and outreaches. We are deeply committed to partnering with the broader medical community to ensure that every woman, everywhere, receives the care she deserves.

That's why platforms like this CME are so important. They allow us to learn, teach, and grow together as professionals. They help us align our practices with emerging global standards. And most importantly, they create a united front in improving the reproductive health landscape in Sierra Leone.



We were encouraged by the turnout and the high level of engagement from participants — especially from those working in the women's health space. The room was filled with doctors committed to staying updated, exchanging experiences, and sharpening their expertise to better serve their patients.

This CME is just one of many to come. At MSSL, we are building a consistent rhythm of continuing medical education because we believe that when providers are well informed, patients are better served. As new practices and research emerge, our aim is to remain at the forefront, championing safe, effective, and compassionate reproductive health care.



Safeguarding Awareness Week at MSSL

Safeguarding Awareness Week provided a valuable opportunity to reinforce knowledge, promote accountability, and empower staff across Marie Stopes Sierra Leone (MSSL) to act on safeguarding concerns. The week focused on reminding all team members of safeguarding policies and encouraging everyone to Speak Up when witnessing or experiencing safeguarding issues. MSSL is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and protective environment for both staff and clients.

As part of the campaign, MSSL partnered with the Girls Advocacy Network (GADNET) to hold a targeted session on child safeguarding with adolescents. (see next page).

Throughout the week, staff from various departments were interviewed to share their understanding and perceptions of safeguarding. These interviews provided meaningful insights into areas of strength and areas where further clarity may be needed.

Additionally, members of the Senior Management Team led structured discussions on the five core safeguarding principles, ensuring alignment from leadership to front-line teams.

To reinforce the message visually and collectively, safeguarding awareness materials were circulated across offices, and a dedicated day was observed during which all staff wore safeguarding-themed t-shirts. This gesture served as a visible symbol of MSSL's continued commitment to both adult and child safeguarding.

Safeguarding Awareness Week reminded us that creating a safe environment goes beyond policies: it requires vigilance, empathy, and a culture where every voice is heard, and every concern is addressed. At MSSL, safeguarding remains a daily responsibility, not just a once-a-year focus.

Photo of the month



THE SMILING JESSICA

There's something about a genuine smile that says more than words ever could. Jessica's joy is a beautiful reminder of the heart behind the work we do at MSSL. In a world of tasks and targets, this moment captures something deeper—purpose and peace.

MSSL and GADNET Collaborate on Safeguarding Awareness for Teens

In a timely and important effort to strengthen the safety and agency of teenagers, Marie Stopes Sierra Leone (MSSL), in collaboration with GADNET, held a comprehensive safeguarding session on Tuesday, July 22nd, 2025, at the GADNET office in Freetown.

The event brought together over 15 teenage boys and girls—mentees of GADNET—from various schools across the city. These students, some as young as 13 and others preparing to enter university, were accompanied by adult mentors who regularly guide their development through GADNET's youth programmes. Representing MSSL were Cyndy Luyi, Octavia Peters, and Aminata, who facilitated the session with sensitivity and clarity.

The conversations that emerged were powerful and, at times, sobering. The students were guided through what safeguarding means—particularly for children and teens—and how to identify and report abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect. Many of them listened intently as scenarios were shared to help them understand the difference between discipline and abuse, between cultural silence and their right to speak up.

One of the more eye-opening moments was when a few students admitted they had experienced situations that made them uncomfortable but had not known whether or how to report it. This sparked a candid conversation



around trust, fear of stigma, and how to find safe adults to talk to. The mentors present—including GADNET's founder and volunteers—played a critical role in reinforcing that their doors are open and their role includes protecting the dignity of the young people under their care.

Another key part of the conversation involved understanding **consent**, especially as students navigate adolescence and begin to experience peer pressure. It was clear that many of them had never had a safe space to unpack these topics. One student expressed relief at “finally understanding that no one has the right to touch you just because they're older.”

Towards the end of the session, the MSSL team introduced a practical tool to support young girls in managing their reproductive health: the ***My Period Tracker*** booklet. Each female student received a copy, with a simple walk-through on how to use it to monitor their menstrual cycle and better understand their bodies. The resource was warmly received, with mentors requesting additional copies for ongoing mentorship sessions.

This partnership between MSSL and GADNET reflects a growing commitment to proactive safeguarding, particularly for youth who may be at risk but are often unheard. While much work remains to be done, sessions like this one are foundational—offering education, reassurance, and a clear message: your safety is a right, and you are not alone.



Our First Family Planning Open Day

On Saturday, 26th July, we hosted our very first Family Planning Open Day at our newly relocated Waterloo Rural Centre in Lumpa right beside the Yellow Mosque. It was more than just an event, it was a meaningful reminder that family planning is not only about health, but about freedom, dignity, and the power to choose.

The event started in the morning hours to the late afternoon, the centre was filled with energy mothers, children dancing, and community members gathering to ask questions, learn, and receive care. Women came from nearby markets, curious men joined in, and many stayed for one-on-one conversations with our team. There was honesty, openness, and real talk about

contraception from condoms and implants to Backup and WellPlan. And not just contraception but conversation were had about all other services we provide here at all of our MSSL Centres.

To mark the day, we offered free services to early attendees, including:

- 5 contraceptive implants
- 10 Depo injections
- WellPlan daily contraceptive pills
- Condom packs and counseling

This day was about showing the community that we're still here, still listening, and still walking alongside them. Though our centre has moved, our commitment hasn't. In fact, this Open Day marks the first of many to come.



We're planning to roll out Family Planning Open Days across all seven of our centres, bringing services, conversations, and care even closer to the people who need them. So, if you're in Aberdeen, Bo, Makeni, or any of our locations we're coming your way very soon.



Success Story: Empowering Choices

At 43, Kona Sandi had seen her fair share of challenges as a mother. But nothing prepared her for the day she nearly lost her life while giving birth. The bleeding was severe, the situation urgent, and only an emergency surgery saved her. Afterward, the doctor advised her to stop having more children to protect her health. A tubal ligation was recommended—a simple, permanent procedure that could prevent future pregnancies and complications. But the cost was out of reach for her family. Her husband simply couldn't afford it.

It was a difficult time. Kona wanted to live, to be present for her children, but she felt stuck between fear and helplessness. Then came a glimmer of hope. A friend who had gone through a similar experience told her about Marie Stopes Sierra Leone and the free surgical care she had received. Kona held onto that hope, praying for a way forward.

Not long after, while in her village, Kona saw the MSSL outreach vehicle pull in. Without hesitation, she walked up to the team, shared her story, and said plainly that she didn't want to have any more children. She had made up her mind—she wanted to live, raise her children in peace, and not have to risk her life again in childbirth.

That day, she attended a sensitisation session led by our Marketing Officer, Mohamed Bangura, who took time to explain the different family planning options—short-term, long-term, and permanent. It wasn't a rushed conversation. Kona sat through the session, asked questions, and then spoke privately



with the lead nurse. She received honest, compassionate counselling and was given space to make her decision.

Kona chose tubal ligation. For her, it wasn't just about contraception. It was about survival, about peace of mind, and about reclaiming her future. After the procedure, she was visibly relieved. Her health began to improve, her confidence returned, and she felt deeply grateful for the care she received—free of charge, and with dignity.

Now, she's not just a beneficiary. She's a voice in her community, encouraging other women—especially those with large families—to seek safe options. She speaks with boldness and compassion, reminding them that it's okay to stop when you've had enough, and that help is available. Kona's journey is one of courage, healing, and transformation. And we are honoured to have walked part of that journey with her.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Vasectomy and tubal ligation are both permanent methods of contraception—but they don't affect your hormones.

Many people think getting a vasectomy (for men) or a tubal ligation (for women) will change how their body feels or functions—but that's not true. These procedures only block the sperm or egg from meeting. You'll still have the same hormones, same strength, and same sex drive. The only difference? No more surprise pregnancies.

Our New Team Members



Please join us in welcoming these amazing individuals to the Marie Stopes Sierra Leone family:

- Dr. Sahr Hartley Emmanuel Moiba
- Nurse Melvina Davies
- Dr. Alfa Badara
- Nurse Elizabeth Fatmata Kamara
- Nurse Sia Esther M'bayo

No more waiting around

Just book, show up and get care.

visit
www.mariestopes.org.sl

