

HOW ARE SIERRA LEONE'S CHILDREN?

Sierra Leone has ratified (pledged to follow) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means that Sierra Leone must respect the rights of the child and listen to what children have to say. Are the rights of the child respected in Sierra Leone? You and other children are the experts.



3.6 MILLION CHILDREN

7.9 million people live in Sierra Leone. 3.6 million are children, and 1.1 million of the children are under five years old.



NAME AND NATIONALITY

From the day you are born you have the right to have a name and to be registered as a citizen in your country. 258,000 children are born every year in Sierra Leone. 2 out of 10 are never registered. There is no documented proof that they exist!



SURVIVE AND GROW

You have the right to life. Sierra Leone must do all it can to allow children to survive and develop. 1 of 8 children in Sierra Leone (29,000 every year) dies before the age of 5, usually due to causes that could have been prevented. The number of children who die has decreased, but is still high.



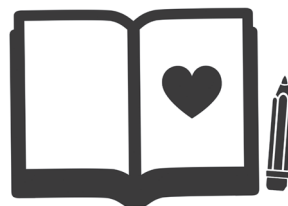
HEALTH

You have the right to food, clean water, medical care and the right to privacy when consulting an adult about any health problem. 6 out of 10 children in Sierra Leone use basic drinking water services. Only 15 out of 100 children use basic sanitation services. 4,400 children (aged 0-14) are believed to live with HIV/AIDS.



A HOME, CLOTHING, FOOD AND SECURITY

You have the right to a home, food, clothing, education, health care and security. More than 5 out of 10 children in Sierra Leone live in extreme poverty with less than 1.90 US-dollar (15,800 Leone) a day to live on.



EDUCATION

You have the right to go to school. Primary and secondary schools should be free for everyone. More than 9 out of 10 children in Sierra Leone go to school. But still many children get almost no education at all, and illiteracy is high.



PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE

You have the right to protection against all forms of violence, including neglect, maltreatment and abuse. Only 58 countries have forbidden all forms of corporal punishment for children. Sierra Leone has not. Many schools still allow caning.



HAZARDOUS CHILD LABOUR

You have the right to be protected against both economic exploitation and work that is hazardous to your health or which prevents you from going to school. All work is prohibited for children under 12. Some children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, such as being debt slaves, child soldiers or used for commercial sexual exploitation. It is estimated that 700,000 children (almost 4 out of 10 of the children aged 5-17) in Sierra Leone have to work.



YOUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD

You have the right to say what you think about any issue that affects you. The adults should listen to the child's opinion before they make decisions, which must always be made in the best interest of the child!

